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Edited by DOUGLAS JERROLD

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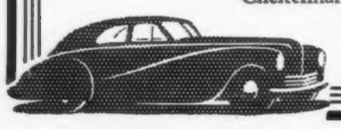

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

The proprietors of *The National Review* and *The English Review Magazine* have entered into an agreement for the amalgamation of the two publications as from June 1st. Having long served the Conservative cause as individual and independent organs, the two Reviews will continue to serve it with equal independence in combination.

The new journal, which will be called *The National and English Review*, will be edited by Lord Altrincham, the present Editor of *The National Review*. Mr. Douglas Jerrold, the present Editor of *The English Review Magazine*, will join the Board of Directors. Mr. Eric Gillett and Mr. Christopher Sykes, at present Literary Editor of *The English Review Magazine*, will be Joint Literary and Art Editors of the new publication. This will contain, in addition to its articles on Politics, Literature and the Arts, contributions of general interest and entertainment value.

The first number of *The National and English Review* will be published on June 1st next and on the first of every month thereafter. It will be sent to all subscribers to both Reviews at the present rates. Subscribers who take in both Reviews will have their terms of subscription proportionately extended. All subscribers have been individually notified of the amalgamation.

The Directors are Lord Altrincham (Chairman), Mr. Douglas Jerrold, Mr. Henry Drummond-Wolff, Major John Maxse, and Mr. B. Godman Irvine.

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THE

ENGLISH REVIEW MAGAZINE

MAY COMMENTARY

I BEGAN this Commentary in May 1945; I conclude it in May 1950, after five years under Socialist government. The time is long enough for a judgment to be passed. Since the spring of 1945 more than half Europe has fallen under the power of Russia, which has, in five years, passed from the status of a gallant ally into that of a declared enemy. The three countries for whose freedom the war was principally fought—Poland, Czechoslovakia and Roumania—which in May 1945 many imagined to have been saved, have lost their independence. Germany is partitioned. The rulers of China in the days when China was the fourth member of the grand alliance which was to bring peace and prosperity to a harassed world, are to-day in discredited exile and their country in the throes of a Communist-abetted revolution. China, like Russia, is a military dictatorship and, like Russia, is the declared enemy of the whole western world. That world, for its part, is sick in mind and body. Italy, France and Belgium are torn by internal conflicts; Greece is barely at the end of an agonizing civil war; Spain is still in angry isolation. The energies of our own country are paralysed by a political deadlock which time by itself is unlikely to solve. The tottering economies of the once proud and dominant nations of Western Europe and the Mediterranean, wait cap-in-hand for *largesse*—yesterday credits, now food and raw materials, and to-morrow arms—from the United States. The residuary legatee of the Second World War in Europe has been Russia. The free peoples of Europe, defenceless and disunited, have been sustained by the insistent and statesmanlike generosity of North America. It is not a heartening story, and the most deplorable feature of it is that it is to such a great extent the story of the same mistakes as those which led to the war of 1939.

NEVERTHELESS, there have been two happy instances in which the western world has learnt wisdom. The constitution of the United Nations organization was so drawn that unless the Great Powers were united, the organization could not begin to function. The moment Russia declared herself, therefore, the enemy of the peace aims of the western powers, UNO ceased to be an influence in international affairs. No governments, however feeble or disingenuous, have been able to evade their responsibilities under pretence that their foreign relations were matters which they left to a third party to regulate. Secondly, the United States looked with a very realistic eye at the governments of France and Great Britain and quickly reached the correct, if not flattering, conclusion that if the security of Western Europe against aggression was left to them the result at any time after 1946 would be precisely the same, and for the same reasons,

as in 1940. Now, as then, France lacks the will, Great Britain lacks the power, to wage a continental war, and neither of these once Great Powers has the energy or the authority to create, lead and dominate a European coalition for the defence of the West or the Mediterranean basin. In the circumstances, the United States resolved from the first to turn its back on the policy of isolation and to energize the free peoples of Europe in the defence of the Rhine and the Danube frontiers, which, as the United States Chiefs-of-Staffs accurately saw, were also the frontiers along which North America itself could best be defended from oriental aggression.

IN all matters arising out of this epoch-making decision of the United States government, Mr. Attlee's administration has co-operated, but hardly zealously. It has accepted everything that was offered; it has offered nothing in return but lip-service to the cause of economy and the promotion of European self-sufficiency in dollars and in armaments. For five years this country has, in fact, been in a very false position, because the aim of the White House is the restoration of a vigorous self-supporting free economy in Europe, while Mr. Attlee's aim has been to build on irremovable foundations the superstructure of a closed socialist economy for Great Britain. The verdict of the country at the last Election has stayed Mr. Attlee's hand before his handiwork had got to the point where our free economy was irretrievably destroyed. It has not, however, enabled the engine to be put into reverse. As far as we are moving, Sir Stafford Cripps's Budget makes it clear that we are still moving, if only at a snail's pace, away from the free economy. So long as this is so, there can be no really effective co-operation with the United States, because we are held from active participation in any working system of European economic or political union for trade and defence. The creation of such a system is now the declared policy of both political parties in the United States.

PERHAPS the oddest, certainly the most significant, remark in the Budget speech was the justification for the increased tax on petrol on the ground that the tax had not gone up since the war, as if it was in the order of nature for the cost of all the essential instruments of commerce and industry to rise under Socialist government. The Budget as a whole was a shocking exhibition of complacency, and betrayed no realization of our problem, which is that we are geared to a low rate of production at high costs, while the rest of the world is moving to a greater production at lower and lower costs. At the moment, thanks to devaluation, our prices are only slightly too high for the main American market, but a miss is as good as a mile. Our prices in any case will rise, and, if so, the £ must fall again; already prudent men are asking how far it is likely to fall, and how soon. There is, of course, no reason why the £ should fall, if we recover our sanity, but it is not sane to take out of productive industry 55 per cent of the profits and treat them as so much *largesse* to be distributed to the weekly wage earners. This is no plea for higher dividends. It would be quite proper in a national emergency for the State to adopt fiscal measures which would lead, for the time, to an exceptionally high proportion of the profits of industry being ploughed back into the business. Nothing but a rapid expansion of our production capacity can save the country from ruin, and that expansion can only come if plant is modernized and extended at an economic cost, and if more labour is transferred, and transferred quickly, from non-productive to productive employment. This policy, however, means a drastic overhaul of the machinery of government, the progressive substitution of fiscal for physical controls, and a consistent and determined drive to increase real as opposed to nominal wages by reducing prices not by increasing wages.

THESE things will not be done quickly, even by a courageous and far-sighted

government, but what will damage our credit sadly is the revelation provided by Sir Stafford Cripps that he is not attempting to do anything of the kind. At every point, he makes the worst of both worlds. As a perfect example, he increases the price of petrol but retains the costly machinery of control. If we were an isolated and self-sufficient community there might be something to be said for the equal distribution of the available surplus petrol among all classes of private motorists. There is a very great deal to be said, in the world as it is, for giving fiscal advantages to users of petrol for commercial or productive purposes and rationing the balance to the private consumer by price and not by control. There is nothing whatever to be said for doubling the tax, raising the cost of transport and still retaining the physical control. The Socialists are no less indifferent in their fiscal policy to ultimate consequences. They complain that there is insufficient private saving and insufficient production, but instead of increasing the rebate on insurance premiums or the earned income allowance, and preferably both, they give a big remission of taxation to the weekly wage earner who will not save but spend it, thus inevitably doing precisely what Sir Stafford Cripps deplores. This remission, which will be as popular as it is intended to be, is a tragic evasion of the unpleasant responsibilities of government. It creates the most disastrous of all impressions, that there is still "something in the kitty" for the wage earners, that productive industry is still squeezable, and that if the Government are again returned to power there will be more pickings. The facts are that industry is being drained dry of its reserves, when it should be spending them in improving its plant, and that incentives to the investment of risk-capital are being progressively removed, while millions, indeed tens of millions, of public money are being wasted on lax administration of subsidies and services. The wage earners' interests are not being served by these policies. They are being fatally prejudiced.

It is certain that, when German and Japanese goods come again into the world's markets, there must be a break in the world price level. What are we doing to prepare for this? Piling up obligations, depleting our reserves and encouraging the electorate to return a government which will continue both these suicidal policies. Nor are we paying attention to the grave effect of these policies on national defence. Preparations for defence do not consist only in the training of men and the provision of arms, equipment and munitions. They require also an economic policy directed to ensuring that, in the event of war, the inflation which is the necessary accompaniment of war can be controlled by an immediate increase in taxation. Such an increase is to-day mathematically impossible. We are spending up to the hilt of what is possible at the moment, and far beyond what will be possible in the near future when world prices fall. This means that in the event of war we shall be driven to virtually uncontrolled inflation or to a nation-wide confiscation of capital. In either case we shall cease to be an asset and will become a heavy liability to our allies. That is not a prospect which strengthens the prospects of peace. That alone is enough to condemn the budgetary policy of the present Socialist government. Sir Stafford Cripps, for all his parade of parsimonious rectitude, is pursuing exactly the same ostrich-like policy which the Labour government pursued after 1929, when they blandly ignored the visible signs of an impending economic crisis and proceeded to pile up expenditure until our credit was ruined and finally collapsed in the crash of 1931. To-day the Socialist party impudently attack the National Government, which came into power to clear up the mess and muddle into which the Socialists had led the country, for their failure to adopt a strong foreign policy. Our foreign policy in 1932 and 1933 could not be strong, because the country had been plunged by Socialist folly into something very near to bankruptcy, and the whole world knew it.

IT is sometimes said that the Socialist government of those days had no responsibility for the financial crisis. They were just, they say, unlucky to have been in office when it happened. They were fully responsible, precisely as Sir Stafford Cripps will be responsible for the next crisis. If you are driving along a narrow country road which you do not know and your lights fail, you may or may not be responsible for the fault which leads to the failure of the lights, but you are certainly wholly responsible for the crash which will occur if you go on driving at the same pace, as if nothing had happened. That is what Mr. Ramsay Macdonald did after 1929; that is what the present Government are doing. Instead of getting our finances slowly but surely back into order, they take unctuous credit for doing really so very little to make them any worse. They are even taking credit for devaluation as if a policy, which has nearly doubled the price of the food and raw materials which we have to buy from overseas, could possibly be anything but a disaster. Devaluation was neither right nor wrong; it was inevitable. But it was the policies of the Socialists, not the *fiat* of the bankers which devalued the £. If these policies continue, the £ will be devalued again.

* * *

IN bringing this series of Commentaries to a close after five years, it is salutary to reflect on the almost negligible influence of the written word on policy-making in an unrestricted democracy. Many "practical" politicians of all Parties will contentedly say that this is a good thing; that politics is no profession for the amateur, that the judgment of what can or cannot be done can only safely be made by the professionals, and that the less back-seat driving we have in our politics, the better for everyone. That is as may be, but it is impossible to reflect on the course of history in this century and to observe the very marked deterioration which has taken place in Europe and Asia, particularly in the daily lives and fortunes of the mass of the people almost everywhere, without realizing that almost the whole of the decisions and actions responsible for the series of catastrophes were wrong decisions, not forced on unwilling statesmen by events but conscientiously taken by statesmen who were just plain wrong in their judgment. This is not to suggest that any class or creed or sect or profession had or ever has had a monopoly of wisdom. The more, however, one studies history, the more one is struck by the fact that someone, somewhere, was always right when the wrong decision was taken. One comes sometimes on strange instances of this. Writing a little time ago on Justinian's ill-fated attempt to restore the authority of the Empire over the Gothic kingdom of Italy, I had said that the fatal error of this policy was that by destroying the existing regime in Italy it threw the country open to the Lombard invasions, because Italy could never be effectively defended from Byzantium. I showed what I had written to an eminent historian of the period who said that I was merely being wise after the event, that no one could have seen the problem in that light at that time; I duly removed the comment from my typescript. Three months later, I came by chance on the record of a protest addressed to Justinian's general, Belisarius, by a local Gothic leader in North Italy, who put forward as a plea to be allowed to retain his independence and authority—precisely the argument which I had used. There were fierce barbarians in the north, he said, who would inevitably descend into the plains of Lombardy if the authority and power of the Gothic chieftains was destroyed. Belisarius was unconvinced, and Italy had to wait some thirteen hundred years, until the time of Cavour, before she recovered her unity.

In our own time, probably the most fatal error in European diplomacy was that of von Bülow in 1902, when he insisted in rejecting the proffered Anglo-German agreement of

which Joseph Chamberlain was the chief protagonist in this country. Bismarck would never have made that mistake, which had its origin in the idiotic conviction of the German Foreign Office that, if Germany waited until her Navy was stronger, she would be able to make an agreement with us on more favourable terms than those proposed by Chamberlain. There was much support for an Anglo-German agreement in Germany, and a good deal of hostility to the idea in England. This fact strengthened the advocates of the mailed fist in Germany and as a result England turned to France. Had Germany been our ally, France would not have been strong enough to attempt an aggressive policy, even if she had the wish to do so. Germany, as we all know now, but as many, including Chamberlain, knew in 1902, would inevitably do so, if confronted with anything that looked like developing into an encircling alliance. Forgetting the error of 1902, we can lay much of the blame for the world's present misfortunes on the authors of the League Covenant who, by failing to make an effective provision for peaceful change, made war the necessary instrument of the policy of all those powers dissatisfied by the status accorded to them under the Peace Treaties of 1919 and 1920.

In our own domestic history, the whole political history of the century has been coloured and distorted by the rejection of the Home Rule Bill by the House of Commons in 1886, and by the rejection by the electorate, at the instance of the re-united Liberal party, of Mr. Baldwin's protectionist platform in 1924. The first decision led, through civil war and much bloodshed, to the re-partition of the United Kingdom, the second to the destruction of the Liberal party.

THESE four fateful decisions have each three things in common: first they were taken in cold blood by able and sincere men after considerable reflection, yet each of them, in a matter of the highest possible moment, led to results precisely the opposite of those intended or expected; secondly, these decisions were each wrong for the same reason, that they failed to look far enough ahead, to the ultimate consequences of inaction; thirdly, in each case the decision was the easy decision; it earned partisan applause; it looked intensely practical; it necessitated none of those difficult calculations of probabilities which are so easily attacked and so easily ridiculed in debate. For these reasons the decisions all appealed to the practical men in the governments or parties concerned, and the warnings of historians, philosophers and economists, which were most certainly forthcoming, were ignored.

ONE of the reasons, it may be, for the accelerated *tempo* of politics in the twentieth century is that with a democratic electorate to consider, it becomes more and more difficult to get support for policies other than those which look easy, simple and practical, the case for which is almost self-explanatory. The number of fundamentally wrong decisions made in the last twenty-five years by the politicians of all countries is, therefore, not only apparently, but in all likelihood, statistically, far greater than any previous quarter of a century.

A simple instance illustrates the modern dilemma. When you have great riches visibly enjoyed by some, and others in great poverty, the easy decision is to take the money from the rich and give it to the poor. That is a decision which the electorate will understand and accept. The right decision, of course, is to look for the cause of the poor man's poverty. The moment you have done so, you will find that, whatever the cause may be, it does not lie in the riches of the rich. It is very likely, however, that there will be disagreement as to what is the precise cause, and still more disagreement as to how to put it right. When at last decisions have been reached on both these disputable points, the politician is left with the hopelessly difficult task of persuading the electorate that his roundabout solution of the problem of poverty is the

right one, and that the obvious and easy solution will, in fact, ultimately, make the poor poorer, not richer. Both these tasks are difficult, but we need not worry to sympathize with the politician because he will attempt neither. His first cursory examination of the problem of mal-distributed wealth will convince him that any root-and-branch solution is going to be difficult to sell to the electorate. He will, therefore, at once abandon the attempt, and deride as futile theorists all who are so mistaken as to go seeking for truth at the bottom of a well.

PLAINLY, the matter cannot rest there. The easy solution, in the instance I have given, is manifestly the wrong one. It is a solution, nevertheless, of the precise pattern of those which have been adopted time and time again by all political parties here, in the United States and in France since 1918, and which have led to a steady deterioration in the economic situation of all three countries. Are we to accept the conclusion that there is a necessary dialectic of democracy, whereby a democracy can only proceed from catastrophe to reaction and then forward again to a greater catastrophe, and so on, until the ultimate collapse of civilization. Or are we to stop short of despair and find a solution through the wider dissemination of historical and political knowledge?

IN the last fifteen years there has been great increase in the intellectual influence of Conservatism at the universities and in the secondary and public schools, but the chief result has been a determined attack by the Socialist party on liberal education in general and on all high educational standards. Only last week a teacher was dismissed for coaching boys in his spare time, not because it was a breach of his contract of service, but because the Education Authority felt that it was wrong for boys to be coached in their spare time, since they might take a higher place than boys who preferred not to do special work. This is only a logical extension of the insistent refusal of the Ministry of Education to allow boys and girls to take the school certificate at an early age if their attainments allow. Such children must be kept back.

The Socialist party have indeed seen that the intellectual tide is turning against them and are taking vigorous steps to deal with the situation by sterilizing the nation's brain power and rendering it, by these drastic means, politically impotent before the Conservative party are awake to the opportunity which would be theirs if they woke up. The whole course of modern history is running against the socialist and, what is far more important, the secularist heresy. Those who are prepared to demonstrate this, in season and out, in terms acceptable to adults, will be performing a great service to the world, and also, whatever the practical politicians may say, a great service to the Conservative party.

It is the profound issues which underlie modern problems which must be made plain, not the best way to draw political advantage from the controversies of the moment. The politicians will assess the political possibilities better than the publicists and no one else will care about them. All serious-minded people are more interested in the past and the future than the present, and we know nothing of intellectual propaganda if we forget this. Let those who are concerned to teach the teachers of the future begin by telling them that the world, in the second half of the twentieth century, will find that it is impossible to disassociate the battle for freedom from the defence of institutional Christianity. That is plain, but it must be made so plain that all can see it, else the cause of freedom will fail, and with it the last secular hope of mankind. When we have taught our teachers that much, they will have learnt not only the beginning but the end of wisdom.

DOUGLAS JERROLD.

COMMUNISM AND THE IMPERIAL FRONTIERS OF THE COMMONWEALTH

By WILLIAM BARTON

THE British Commonwealth has two great international frontiers, the Durand Line on the north-west frontier of what is now Pakistan, and the northern and north-eastern boundary of the Indian sub-continent.

The Durand Line from the Pamirs southwards divides, for a thousand miles or more, the North-west frontier province and its tribal hinterland from Afghanistan. Near Quetta, at its southern limit on the Baluch table-land, the line turns west to the Persian border. The northern boundary, too, starts from the Pamirs, runs between Kashmir and the Chinese province of Sinkiang to Tibet, where it turns south between Tibet and Kashmir, then through the Simla hills and along the mountains that divide the independent State of Nepal from India and onwards past Sikkim, Bhutan and Assam to Burma.

The surge of exultant Communism towards Tibet, with Sinkiang under Soviet control, and Soviet influence strong in Kabul, has turned the searchlight of international politics on these two frontiers. Can they be defended against a Communist thrust? On that may depend the fate of South-east Asia, Indonesia and the Middle East.

LET us glance at the position on these frontiers. For thousands of years till the establishment of the British regime, floods of invasion have swept down the passesof North-west India into the rich plains beyond. It was only when a strong Central Government commanding the resources of the greater part of the country was in existence that such invasions were thrown back. For the last century or more, the aim of British Imperial strategy in India has been to make the North-west frontier secure against Russian aggression. The Afghan war of 1839-42 was fought with this object: so was the second Afghan war of 1878-80. In the first World War, with Turkey on the side of the Germans, the danger of militant Islam in the Middle East declaring a Holy War against the allies in India had to be faced. The attempt made by Turkish agents to bring this about failed thanks largely to the loyalty of the Amir of Afghanistan. In the second World War, measures were taken to meet a possible German movement towards India through north Persia by stationing a large Indo-British force in that region.

After the war and up to the partition of the sub-continent, the Hindu Congress practically dominated the Government of India. It was part of its policy to win the Afghan frontier to its side. To this end it heavily financed a revolutionary movement in the frontier province of a group of Pathans known as the "Red-shirts" led by Dr. Khan Sahib and his brother, Abdul Ghaffar Khan. It succeeded so far as to admit of Dr. Khan's forming a Congress Ministry which functioned till partition when it was abruptly dismissed by the Pakistan leader, Qaidi Azam Jinnah. Shortly before, a referendum had shown plainly that the frontier preferred Pakistan to India.

MEANWHILE the menace of Soviet Russia, dormant during the World War, had reappeared on the North-western border. Russian influence in the Afghan

province on the Oxus was growing: through its inflated Embassy at Kabul the Kremlin could hope to establish useful contacts with the frontier tribes.

The British Government and the Government of India in their panicky haste to bring about partition seemed to have forgotten the existence of the North-west frontier. At the last moment they issued a proclamation to the Afghan tribes that their status and customs would be preserved. For anything the authorities at Delhi knew, half a million tribesmen from both sides of the Durand Line might have swooped down and seized the country to the Indus and then declared for Kabul. Indian troops were hastily withdrawn. Time was required to get the Pakistan army together to take their place. Its elements were scattered far and wide in class units. Yet India indicts the Pakistan Government before UNO for not holding back the border tribesmen who invaded Kashmir, mostly through trans-border country, in order to defend their co-religionists against the Hindu Maharajah and the Indian troops Pandit Nehru had sent to his aid. If Pakistan had been given time to organize its forces it might have endeavoured to keep the tribesmen in check: the result would have been to set the border aflame from one end to the other. Under such provocation the tribes would not have joined Pakistan: the whole province and the tribal hinterland would have gone over to Kabul. Is that what India wanted? It is true that such a development might have led to the collapse of Pakistan which so many Hindus desired. But could India have recovered the frontier without British help? And would Russia have stood by and watched the process? Fortunately, the tribes, attracted by the emergence of a great Muslim State, decided to join it. Their loyalty has made possible the withdrawal of the greater part of the Pakistan regular troops from the frontier outposts.

THERE have been no border disturbances since partition. The trouble has been with Kabul. Immediately after partition the Afghan Government revived the Red-shirt claim to a frontier republic which, of course, would have gravitated to Kabul. Short of this they demanded the absorption into Afghanistan of the tribal belt with its 2,500,000 Afghans between the Durand Line and the settled districts of the frontier province. This would have made the administration of the province almost impossible. Foiled by the loyalty of the tribes and the firm attitude of the Pakistan Government the Kabul authorities have, nevertheless, persistently carried on a campaign of calumny against their neighbour both in their official Press and wireless, combined with appeals to the tribes to transfer their allegiance to Afghanistan. Political circles in Karachi suspect India of encouraging Kabul manoeuvres; the nonchalance of His Majesty's Government in regard to this provocation by the Afghans to a member of the Commonwealth is bitterly resented. In the background Russia is intriguing with the tribes: the rift between Kabul and Karachi is a direct encouragement to a Communist campaign in these explosive regions. So far the tribes have remained loyal, strongly repudiating the blandishments of Kabul.

A survey of the position on the Afghan frontier suggests that neither His Majesty's Government nor India regard it as a danger point. How can one otherwise explain the indifference of the British Foreign Office to the intrigues of Kabul which might so easily have set the frontier in a blaze? Even if they thought the risk immaterial from a Commonwealth point of view, was it not a moral obligation on their part to give their support to a member of the Commonwealth when in a difficulty not of its own creation? Did his Majesty's Government and India think that with less than a third of the resources of the former Indian Government, Pakistan, unaided by either of them, could be expected to defend a frontier, which up to partition had been regarded as an Imperial responsibility?

WHAT motive inspires the attitude of India? Political circles in Karachi are convinced that India sees in the stirring up of trouble on the Afghan frontier the possibility of embarrassing the Pakistan Government and so weakening its position *quâ* Kashmir. With Afghanistan hostile and the allegiance of the frontier tribes undermined, Pakistan could not risk evoking a war over Kashmir and might be induced to accept terms dictated by India. Time is obviously on the side of the latter. It is hardly necessary to comment that a disturbed borderland is an invitation to the Kremlin to intensify its Communist campaign in that part of the world.

During two centuries of British rule till the Japanese over-ran Burma and crossed the Indian frontier there had been no threat of invasion from the north-east. This immunity has disappeared and it is on the North-east frontier that the Communist danger is most insistent. In the north, Kashmir is open to infiltration from Sinkiang now dominated by Russia: there are reports in the Indian Press that already Communism from that direction has established itself in Srinagar, the over-crowded capital of the State. North Kashmir is occupied by Pakistani Irregulars: India is anxious to replace them: it is thought in Karachi that the rumour of Communist trouble in Srinagar is an invention to support their claim. The impetus of the Communist attack farther along the line will depend largely on whether Mao-Tse-tung decides to annex Tibet. He has already expressed his intention of doing so and there is nothing to prevent him. The Dalai Lama has appealed to the Western Powers: material help is, however, almost impossible: moral support would not go very far. Tibet can hardly expect India to intervene. She would naturally desire to avoid war in so remote a country with the danger of an explosion on the Kashmir front. Apart from such considerations diplomatic complications stand in the way. India has recognized the Mao-Tse-tung regime; as an Indian spokesman said the other day, his Majesty's Government through the Government of India more than a quarter of a century ago, recognized the suzerainty of China over Tibet, a right to which the new Government has succeeded: in such circumstances India could not take upon herself the *rôle* of protector of the Tibetan Lama regime without the concurrence of the rest of the Commonwealth.

INTERVENTION being practically out of the question, India must face the danger of Tibet becoming a base for a Communist movement against her. For several hundred miles she has a buffer in Nepal: would this hold? It is more than likely that the Communist armies would attack Nepal unless its Government agreed to accept Chinese overlordship and the use of the country as a base against India. The Gurkhas would fight but could not long hold out against mechanized Chinese forces. It would be in India's interests to intervene but here again she would not venture to do so with the Kashmir trouble unsettled. It should be noted that the authority of the Nepalese Government has been weakened of late by irresponsible political agitation organized by the Indian Congress. It is understood that the Indian Government has recently taken steps to repress these activities.

The most frequented route between India and Tibet lies through Sikkim, a small mountain State lying between Nepal and Bhutan. Semi-independent at partition, it was recently taken over by the Government of India in consequence of trouble arising from the imposition of a Congress Government on the people.

Bhutan runs for two hundred miles along the Assam border. It is semi-independent under an Indian protectorate and military aggression against it from Tibet would be an act of war against India.

From Bhutan, Assam marches with Tibet for three hundred miles or so to the Burma border, a very exposed part of the frontier. The border line then turns south between

Burma and Assam to Pakistan at its southern limit.

THE policy of His Majesty's Government with regard to Burma has greatly complicated the problem of holding up Communism in South-east Asia. Handing over the country as they did in a state of administrative chaos to a handful of inexperienced politicians, was to ask for trouble. They should have remembered the debt of gratitude they owed to the Kerens for their loyalty and for the valuable services they rendered during the war, and have insisted that in the final settlement they would be given security. This would have obviated much of the subsequent troubles. Obviously the British should have re-built the administration before renouncing their responsibility. Had they done so and had an agreement been made with the Kerens, in all probability Burma would have remained in the Commonwealth. As a member of that body with a stable administration, she would have kept Communism at bay on her borders. Her neighbour, Siam, with her large Chinese community, has little hope of avoiding infection. Further east in Indo-China the French are maintaining a force of nearly 150,000 men to uphold the new popular regime against the Communist rebel group led by Ho-Chih-Minh, recognized as the lawful Government by Mao-Tse-tung. How much more usefully employed would the French element in this large army be in its own country!

The position is not much better in Indonesia. Communism is already well set in the islands, especially in Java: there is a large Chinese element, a proportion of which supports the new regime in its country; the Government is unstable: a revolutionary movement by a fanatical Muslim group (the Dar-ul-Islam) is gathering momentum. With India in Communist hands, Indonesia would be speedily drawn into the vortex.

Mao-Tse-tung will almost certainly take over Tibet in the near future. Having done so he will probably use it as a base for infiltration rather than for a mass invasion of India. For a major operation of that kind he may be expected to wait till chaotic conditions in the administration of India or civil war makes the adventure less dangerous. Should the Chinese decide on invasion they would probably move in two directions, from Tibet into India and from Sinkiang into Kashmir.

A SURVEY of conditions on these two frontiers of the Commonwealth suggest that for the time being India and Pakistan will be mainly concerned to hold up Communist infiltration. How will India meet the responsibility? When handing over the greater part of India to the Hindu Congress, British Socialist statesmen felt that they were setting up a great democracy to the benefit not only of India but of Asia of which they saw India as the pre-destined leader. The Indian scene, at the moment, is hardly encouraging to such high hopes. The administration is weakened by the enormous expenditure on defence which makes it impossible to provide the finance required to prevent economic collapse: Congress rule is challenged by a strong socialist group and the powerful caste Hindu Party of the Mahasabha. Labour unrest is a serious problem. As was only to be expected, the poverty of the masses has given an opening to Communism: the infection is widespread, but chiefly in the towns. There have been some ugly incidents in Calcutta and West Bengal: a belt of Communism extends from Malabar on the west coast to the neighbourhood of Calcutta. The trouble is rampant in South-east Hyderabad.

The Indian Government has found it necessary in dealing with subversive activities and especially with Communism to introduce a Public Safety act which permits arrest and indefinite detention of persons suspected of such activities: the Press is subject to more stringent control than in the era of British rule. Hundreds of suspects, mostly Communists, crowd the jails; recently in an *émeute* in Salem jail in Madras, thirty Communists were shot dead and hundreds

wounded. There have been similar episodes elsewhere on a smaller scale. In the past two or three months clashes between Muslims and Hindus in both Dominions have been a disturbing element in public life. Add to all this the explosive nature of relations with Pakistan over Kashmir and one may very well ask whether the Indian Government is in a position to devise measures against the penetration of Communism along 1,500 miles of frontier.

TWO and a half years ago the voice of India was heard with respect in international councils. Would it carry weight as things are to-day? Was not the ideal of the Asian leadership of India in any case a mirage? After all the Middle East is Muslim and unlikely to accept Hindu hegemony. Hindu policy has not commended itself to international Muslim opinion and Turkey, Persia, Irak, Arabia and Egypt have strongly criticized the Hindu attitude over Kashmir. Indonesia is largely Muslim and as already remarked, the present unstable Government has to face a fanatical Muslim movement, the object of which is to establish a predominately Muslim regime. Burma has always been allergic to Hindu predominance since it was absorbed by the British into the Indian Empire: the economic grip of the Madras Chetty on the Irrawaddy Delta was always a grievance.

Pandit Nehru has not recognized the Nationalist Government under Bao Dai in Indo-China because of his doubts whether it represents popular wishes. The alternative is Communism. Anti-communist India would have no influence there. In Siam it would be in competition with Communist China.

From what has been said only an optimist could see any prospect of India playing a leading part in South-east Asia in the near future, unless she adopts a policy that does not involve concentration on preparations for civil war.

FOR Pakistan, Kashmir involves a life and death struggle. It has poisoned relations with India and led to other quarrels with her of a serious nature. The threat of war overshadows the whole country. To be prepared for it Pakistan is spending seventy per cent of her revenues on defence to the neglect of economic development so urgently necessary in the public interests, especially in Eastern Bengal. Fortunately there is little, if any, trouble with left or right-wing elements in Pakistan as there is in India. Some infection of Communism exists in east Bengal but so far this is not serious. There is a danger of it spreading unless economic conditions improve. Pakistan as already noted holds the mountains of north Kashmir on the Sinkiang border but with so many distractions elsewhere it is doubtful whether her Government is in a position to take effective measures against Communist penetration from that direction.

The recent Conference of Prime Ministers of the Commonwealth Dominions which met in Colombo was mainly concerned with the problem of denying south-east Asia to Communism. It does not seem to have achieved anything of importance. The Conference regarded the political chaos in Burma as a serious impediment to a policy of checkmating Communism, but oblivious of the utter failure of such methods in China, it proposed to give a loan to the Shadow Government of Rangoon. Stronger measures are surely necessary. Whether the trouble between Pakistan and her Afghan neighbour was brought up at Colombo is not clear. Obviously it was in Commonwealth interests to take steps to improve relations with one of its member Dominions and the Afghan Government in the hope of removing a danger to the great international frontier of north-west Pakistan. There was some discussion of the dispute between the two Dominions over Kashmir, but apparently nothing practical was suggested.

NOW it is beyond challenge that there can be no real opposition to Communist aggression in south-east Asia and the Middle East so long as the two countries, India and Pakistan, who must play the leading parts in resisting it, are at each other's throats over Kashmir. A Third World War may result unless the quarrel is composed. What are the prospects of a settlement?

Two years of endless discussion of the problem at Lake Success has achieved practically nothing. There is indeed little hope of a decision so long as UNO clings to mediation as the only method of approach to a decision of such issues. Recent reports hold out hope of more effective action now that India is prepared to consider the withdrawal of all her troops from Kashmir pending a plebiscite.

But there should be no further avoidable delay in moving in this direction and if a fresh deadlock occurs, which is more than likely, the Commonwealth and the U.S.A. should intervene decisively and insist on a decision. By this time American statesmen must have realized that economic uplift as a solvent of the Communist virus in south-east Asia and Asia generally is a long-term policy and can only be applied if militant Communism is checked. To save Pakistan and India it must be held at bay along the great frontiers described in this article. A strong defence can only be built up if the rival claimants to Kashmir can be brought together. Otherwise both must go down in ruin.

HOW is this to be done? India can only be denied ultimately to Communism by an all-round improvement in the standard of living. This depends on industrial and agricultural development being carried out on a massive scale. Alone India cannot succeed in the economic field. She must rely on help in immense volume from abroad, mainly from the Commonwealth and America. There can be no such co-operation until peace reigns over the sub-continent. Would it be unfair to make such help dependent on a settlement of the Kashmir quarrel? All that is wanted is that India should agree to an absolutely impartial plebiscite. Pakistan, like India, will need co-operation from the west in the economic field. This too might be made conditional on her agreeing to a compromise settlement if developments suggest that reasonable concessions to India would help a decision. What is essential is that a settlement should satisfy both parties. That achieved, all other disputes would speedily be composed and the two former rivals would stand shoulder to shoulder against the Communist menace. Co-operation in what is almost a life and death matter would help to smooth differences: it should act as a sedative to the bitterness of the communal feud between Hindu and Muslim: the economic collaboration on which the prosperity of both Dominions depends would be secured. With the feud composed, with the Dominions in alliance supported by the Commonwealth and the U.S.A., Communism would recede discouraged and discomfited. There would be reactions away from the frontiers: China might weaken in her allegiance to the Kremlin. Mao-Tse-tung might hesitate to push into Tibet and Burma. But the sands are running out: half a million war-like tribesmen on the North-west frontier are chafing at the long delay in the settlement of the Kashmir dispute and threatening a fresh invasion: it might tax the strength of Pakistan to the breaking point to hold them back. In any case there would be war. Let us hope that the Commonwealth and the U.S.A. will intervene while there is still time. It may mean survival.

THE POSITION OF LIBERAL THOUGHT

By COLLIN BROOKS

GILBERT CHESTERTON says somewhere—I quote from memory, for in that vastitude of work and words it is impossible for a time-haunted man to verify his references—"I still believe in Liberalism, but there was a rosy time when I still believed in Liberals." Mr. Christopher Hollis, in a penetrating, amusing, but deadly serious article in the May issue of this journal, went further, and seemed to imply that there was a time when not even Liberals believed in Liberalism, but only in a Liberal cast of thought. He was writing of the 19th century system which was:

> . . . that 600 odd gentlemen were elected by their constituents to legislate and carry out the business of the House of Commons. It is true (added Mr. Hollis) that most of those gentlemen belonged, more or less loosely, to a political party and that the political parties had each adopted, more or less loosely, a few general political principles. But the notions of a detailed programme, offered to the country and imposed on the party's candidates, and of a mandate deriving from that programme, were unknown.

Under that system "candidates made up their own promises and programmes." Even so, there was at that time something recognizable as "Liberalism," as there was something recognizable as "Conservatism." When a man of the Bright-Cobden era said "I am a Liberal," he did not necessarily mean that he belonged to an official political party. When Emerson, about the same period, declared that "Whoso would be a man must be a nonconformist," he certainly did not mean "Whoso would be a man must belong to some particular Dissenting sect." The parties, as the sects, follow the philosophy, not the philosophy the parties. Indeed, it would be a harrowing spectacle to see the members of any political party caucus striving to devise and enunciate a philosophy, rather than to translate a philosophy into a programme. The true problem of our day is really "What has happened to, and is to happen to, Liberalism?" rather than the more immediately attractive one of "What has happened to the Liberal Party?"

THE very word "Liberalism" must always have carried with it the menace of the destruction of that attitude which it signified. Once the great masses of the manual workers were seized of the belief that wealth belongs to those who create it, their own attitude towards those professing Liberalism could only be "Who are *you* to be liberal?" Once Proud'hon uttered his monumental fallacy, and heresy, that "Property is theft," a man professing to be liberal either with the material or abstract benefits of society must have seemed to those whom Proud'hon had converted to be only a "fence" prepared to pay Danegeld. To a Conservative, the man who said proudly, "I am a Liberal," seemed unctuous, but to a Chartist, a Socialist, a Social-Democrat, or a Communist, he can only have seemed frankly hypocritical. To little unsophisticated Oliver, kind Mr. Fagin could seem a liberal old gentleman, but not to Charley Bates, and still less so to the Artful Dodger. From this point of view there always attached to Liberalism a strange paradox, that those who held it, particularly those who banded themselves into a Liberal Party to further it, believed more strongly

in a caste and class system of society than did their hated opponents, the Conservatives. You cannot be liberal with that which you do not possess, unless you propose to be liberal with that which rightly belongs to others. The Liberal, therefore, unless we are to accept him as the mere despoiler of others, must always have felt that his own possessions—whether inherited, acquired through trade, or aggregated through the sweated labour of women and children—were morally his own, that the privileges which those possessions gave to him were morally his own, and that he was a generous fellow for proposing to share a little of them with the other classes of the community. He, above all others, was intent to conserve the classes so that he and his fellow Liberals might be the arbiters of what each class should possess and enjoy, whether of goods or good. It is true, of course, that when the Liberal eyes were turned from "the lower orders" to "the upper classes," the intention was slightly different; then it was that the Liberal class, which alone, or so it was suggested, possessed a sense of social justice, should achieve the same end not by being liberal with its own possessions and privileges, but by forcibly, under the law—Liberal made law—dispossessing the one other class which challenged its dominance of the State.

BUT behind and beyond this arrogant and predatory Liberalism there was—and there is still—a genuine Liberalism, which does, indeed, spring from a strong sense of social justice, even perhaps of human pity. The truth about it is that it is not the possession of any one party. It is an attitude of soul and mind which animates men of all parties. It is not the inspiration of policies so much as the touchstone of policies. It may drive its possessor from party to party, as it drove many sincere men into opposition to so-called "Liberal" coercion Acts, and against menaces to the liberties of the people of Ulster. It may cause its possessor to "prefer England free to England sober," even when the whole official Liberal Party is roaring for more stringent licensing laws to restrain still further the modest drinking of the poor. It is that Liberalism which would protect the Church as by Law Established, for as long as the Establishment persists, but would not deny freedom of conscience to those of different faiths.

As Mr. Hollis, and others, have said, or implied, the weakness of the existing Liberal Party is that it is composed of two sections whose basic philosophies are not only different, but antithetical. There is that section which would more accurately be called Libertarian than Liberal; there is that section which will be liberal with anything but liberty. Of, and to, that second section those with any knowledge of the history of Liberalism, and any sense of the meaning of the word, can only say "*Que diable allait-il faire dans cette galère?*" The exponent and supporter of a maximum of State planning and communal regulation may be actuated by one of several political philosophies, but he cannot, surely, be actuated by Liberalism. Even those who sincerely feel that the maximists of the Socialist Party go too far in the pursuit of State Planning, and that the Tories do not go far enough towards a necessary State organization, cannot reconcile with their inherent Liberalism an attachment to a Party which is prepared in moments of choice rather to side with the Socialists, whose whole philosophy and purpose is anti-Liberal, than with the Conservatives, whose own Liberalism is only limited by a healthy awareness that it is as dangerous to tamper with a tested Constitution in one way as in another.

IN practical life, political attachment is as much, perhaps more, a question of temperament than of thought, or even of fully realized emotion. Who, until the greater Day, when all motives are revealed, shall say what on boat race day makes an errand boy in Bermondsey an ardent partizan of Cambridge and a typist in Tooting an equally frenzied

"rooter" for Oxford? What mystic depths of character keep either of them faithful even through the monotony of successive defeats? Outside the dragooned ranks of organized Labour, wherein the motive is frankly material and self-preservatory from intimidation, what makes a widow in Wigan a Socialist, her counterpart in Carlisle a Conservative, and another in Ambleside, of similar circumstances and breeding, a Liberal? Hereditary loyalty? Perhaps. But that is only an aspect of temperament. A persisting environment? Perhaps. But that, again, is but an aspect of temperament. Family tradition and local circumstances are the very parents of temperament. The task of the political proseletyser is to conquer such temperament by teaching, to oppose, where necessary thought to emotion, and where necessary, emotion to thought. The philanthropic glow of enthusiasm for lavish spending schemes of supposed social betterment has to be subjected to the cold thought that such benevolence may mean bankruptcy: the stern economic thought that tyrannical direction of labour may mean some slight material social benefit has to be countered by the emotional truth that the betterment will be bought by the disruption of the family and a mode of life not worth the living. It is a difficult task to conquer temperament by teaching.

Although such an assertion would, no doubt, be hotly contested in the Psychology Section of the British Association, those who have worked much and long in the British constituencies would probably agree—however pragmatically—that there are in our people, broadly speaking, three dominant and recognizable temperaments, the Conservative, the Liberal and the Egalitarian. They are not clear cut, for each has in it something of the others. It is as if each person were a Parliament in miniature, with two minority parties. The Egalitarian streak in each of us may be born of pity or of predatoriness, the desire, from self abnegation, to suffer that others may benefit, or the desire that others should suffer that we may benefit; from whichever it comes, if the Egalitarian streak colours the whole temperament, its possessor must, perforce, be a Collectivist of one kind or another. But, taking it by and large, the British breed is not of the Egalitarian temper. Its sense of justice tends towards differing rewards for different services and different endurances. This is as much so in those who are the children of Liberalism as in those who are the children of Conservatism. If, as it seems to so many observers, including many devout Liberals, the spirit of Liberalism can no longer find an outlet in an official Liberal Party, what must be its recourse? If those professing and possessed by Liberalism turn Left, they can only, eventually, surrender everything for which they care to the Collectivists, and to the Liberal temperament, Collectivism in its full, egalitarian, manifestation must be anathema. What confronts them if they turn Right?

IF there is one section of our contemporary society which by temperament and training is not Egalitarian, it is that of the skilled workers. When one uses the term "skilled workers" the image evoked is probably that of the skilled manual worker, the mechanic and the foreman, but the term should be wider than that. It should embrace all the managerial functionaries and all the entrepreneurs of small businesses, whether in wholesale or retail trade or in manufacture or distribution, to say nothing of the professions. Of these, Conservatism has largely retained or attracted to itself most of those in all the categories just sketched, save one, the "skilled worker" in the narrower sense. Largely because of his trade union affiliations, largely because of the steady preaching for many years of class antagonism, largely because of the failure of organized Conservatism to approach him properly, the "skilled worker" has thrown in his lot with the Collectivists, a little hypnotized, no doubt, because the wing of Collectivism to which he belongs calls itself "the Labour

Party." Another category of skilled worker which is turning towards the Collectivists is that which embraces teachers of all grades, from the elementary schoolmaster and schoolmistress to the University Don. In both these categories, for generations, the dominating temperament seemed to be that of Liberalism, although Dickens with his acute eye could detect (to borrow Macaulay's phrase in another Dickensian connection) the beginnings of a sullen Socialism in Bradley Headstone. There is no reason to suppose that there has been any fundamental psychological change.

Outside the professions and the "skilled workers," in the narrow sense of that term, the "little man" has returned from a tentative excursion into Collectivism. He has not, if the polls of 1950 are any guide, reconstituted the official Liberal Party by flocking back in any numbers to its banner. In the past, all parties shamefully neglected him, even the Chamberlain Radicals of old, though the once-famous and potent Francis Schnadhorst, the engineer of Radical victory, had been himself a small tradesman. In our time, after the successful onslaught of the Collectivists in 1945, we have had the wit to pay more attention to that "little man"—not the "little man" of the cartoonist Strube, but the real little man, the man with a small, self-created business, the little family, but the great aspirations, upon whose survival and success depends the survival and success of the traditional mode of life not only in these islands but in all Christendom, for the "little man" in industrialized, trading Britain is the nearest thing we retain to our lost peasantry. It was not what Conservatism offered him—unfortunately—but what Collectivism did to him, which brought him back. What has Conservatism to offer his "opposite numbers" in the ranks of the manual labourers and the professions if they, too, feel the temperamental need to turn from the Left? To repeat an earlier question — what confronts them if they turn Right?

BEFORE that question is answered, or the answer indicated, let us look at the necessary alternatives. Either the skilled worker, in the wider sense, is going to return to Constitutionalism, or the nation for generations is to be divided between two forces—Collectivism and Free Enterprise. If the present, all too palpable division between those two forces is to persist, the machinery of Parliamentary Government must either break down or be drastically reformed, for reasons that I strove to set out in an article in these pages a month ago. If it breaks down, we shall be thrust into the chaos which the Communists desire. If it is drastically reformed, the reform, because of the circumstances making it necessary, can only be one which will further divorce the citizen from control of government. The power of the Executive, and the bureaucracy, will be increased. An increase in the power of the Executive is the antithesis of Liberalism. Economically, the continuance of the present division into two fundamentally opposed politico-economic camps means the stultification of industry. There can be no confidence—without which industry cannot function—if electoral swings every five years, or less, are to change the bases of finance, negotiation and trade, and are to imperil investment, and jeopardize the continuity of industrial control, in the sense of threatening the tenure of office of those responsible for the conduct of affairs.

The alternative, or, as I for one would say, the salvation of the situation, is the return of the skilled workers—in either the narrow or the broad sense of the term—to the party which alone can oppose the progress of Collectivism, the Conservative Party, which is also the party through which the traditional Liberalism of vast sections of our people can hope to find expression, and in which alone it can find an implement of Government. What confronts them in that return? The Conservative philosophy may in its various historic expressions seem to differ much from that of Liberalism, but it differs very little

from the principles of the historic Liberal programme. "Peace, Retrenchment and Reform"—these are today as much the pillars of Toryism as of Liberalism. The State the servant of the citizen, and not the citizen the serf of the State—none of the great leaders of Liberalism would have quarrelled with that relationship. The redress of Social injustice, with the Law as the arbiter—again, that is inherent in both Conservatism and Liberalism. The relations between employers and employed to be for their decision and definition, with the State as the honest friend and helper of both sides in any dispute or negotiation, but not as the imposer of settlements—that, again, both conserves the original concept of the Conservative legislation which gave trade unions their legality and preserves the spirit of Liberalism, which would insist upon the maximum scope for private action within the governance of the State. The right of a man to make his own career within the accepted terms of collective bargaining, and to receive the reward due to his especial skill or assiduity, *and* to apply that reward to the betterment of his own family at his, and not the State's, decision—that, again, embodies the spirit of Liberalism and conserves what all Conservatives desire to preserve, the identity and dignity of man.

WILLIAM EWART GLADSTONE said somewhere—again I quote from memory, for his vastitude of words is greater than even that of Gilbert Chesterton—"Toryism is founded upon distrust of the people, tempered by fear; Liberalism is founded on trust of the people, tempered by prudence." These, it will be seen, in practical politics, amount to the same thing, but the Old Gentleman was right in seizing upon trust as the vital element in political relationships. For at least a quarter of a century the skilled worker within the trade union world has been sedulously taught to distrust the Tories. One of Low's most effective anti-Tory cartoons was a picture of a starveling and dragooned mob of miners with, in the forefront, a caricature of Stanley Baldwin swinging a cosh and murmuring "You Can Trust Me." What may well keep from alliance with, or support of, the Tories those who are the receptacles of genuine Liberalism is that very lack of trust which Gladstone averred the Tories felt for the people. The "smear campaign" against the Tories over the past half century has not been without its effect. The bitter proletarian hatred of the Tories drives deep. Politically, economically and socially the distrust has somehow to be conquered. In its extreme it shows in the venom of such persons as Mrs. Braddock, or in the Attorney General's cry of "We are the masters now!", but at its mildest it shows not at all save in the ballot boxes. How is it to be conquered? Certainly not merely by pamphlets and the visits to doorsteps of genteel canvassers. The very sentiments which pamphlets and canvassers utter are themselves distrusted.

Such distrust is only to be overcome by ample demonstration that the interest of the worker, and particularly of the skilled worker, is safe in the hands of the Conservative Party, to which has fallen the lot of translating into political action the spirit of genuine Liberalism in the absence of any effective third party. Such a recipe for regained trust is, of course, easier stated than satisfied, but it involves no more than a liberalization of Parliamentary measures projected and of the methods of party organization, which could be effected with no breach of Conservative principles. In a time such as ours the first test of any proposed legislation should, surely be: Is it fiscally workable, economically sound? Our first effort, under the rule of any party, is economically to survive. The next test should be: Does it conserve or impair those principles of liberty which until the exigencies of war affected us were the very springs of our national political being? Measures which passed both tests could be offensive to neither Tories nor Liberals; they could only be abhorrent to the rigid minds of the Collectivists.

WITH regard to party organization, it is freely said that in too many constituencies the Conservatives remain the party of snobbery. This, for all I know, may be a gross slander, but it is widely believed. The belief causes a certain shyness of approach in many, particularly of the younger generations, to whom the Conservative creed makes a natural appeal. While it is true that no Conservative Association can go out into the highways and by-ways and compel supporters and potential supporters to come in; it may also be true that in some Divisions too little is done to conquer the political or social prejudices of those who with a little more encouragement would do so. This is particularly likely in those county, and some urban, Divisions where for generations party differences, quite fallaciously, were felt to be in rough alignment between Church and Chapel. It may likely be true in some industrialized Divisions in which the feeling had been sedulously nurtured that the Conservatives are the party of black coats and white collars only, even though, today, the proletariat, as it loves to call itself, knows no distinction of garb save a metaphorical one. In such Divisions the unattached voter, actuated more by the old-fashioned Liberal temperament than by any other stimulus in politics, will in practice be less happy within the Collectivists' than the Conservative ranks, but he or she must be made to realize that before some ancient social prejudice dictates a political attachment. It must also be shown that participation in Conservative organization will be no nominal thing, but that those who sincerely feel that Conservatism has become the true expression of Liberalism, and that Collectivism must always remain its antithesis, will be afforded every opportunity to find such expression, whether as committee workers or candidates at the polls, from no matter what strata of society they may come.

There remains, always, the possibility that some day a new third party will emerge, whether of the Left or of the Right, but it cannot quickly emerge and the present need of the nation is to escape from the Parliamentary deadlock of two equally opposed parties, pledged to irreconcilable doctrines, before it brings us to disaster by making our Constitution unworkable. It may well be that such a problematical new party will prove to be a bifurcation of that uneasy amalgam which we today call the Socialist Movement: that is on the lap of the gods. The only concern of this superficial discussion of the situation is to suggest that, until a third party does show signs of emerging, with all the necessary electoral machinery to make it effective, the bourne of those who still revere not merely the outworn tenets of the decrepit Liberal Party but the spirit of genuine Liberalism, which once gave it life, is the Conservative Party, and that those within the Labour Party who are not doctrinaire Socialists, who resent the egalitarianism which means, eventually, equality of pay and status between the skilled and unskilled worker, the industrious and the idle, must also, to save themselves, come into co-operation. The broad principles of Conservatism conserve the essentials of both the genuine Liberalism and the genuine Trade Unionism—the liberty of the subject and the sanctity of collective bargaining. It may well prove that on the steady and simple exposition of these broad principles, rather than on the tortuous explanation of detailed "policies," the next electoral battle will be won, for it will be a battle for the soul of Liberalism and for the survival of trade unionism no less than for the triumph of Toryism.

Short Story

THE AQUARIUM

By GUNTER GROLL

Translated from the German by TANIA ALEXANDER

THROUGH the open window the sun fell onto the writing-desk and the little stand with the aquarium. Felix put his hand on the globe which stood on the desk. The side on which the sun was shining was quite warm. It lit up the Atlantic Ocean, the coast of Spain and Africa. India and China, the Highland of Tibet, and the Malay Islands lay in the shade. Felix gave the globe a push which sent it slowly spinning round. He caught a glimpse of the Pacific Ocean, then America glided past, and finally Europe came to light and disappeared. On the table beside the globe lay some books, a dictionary and a cigarette box. There was also a shallow bowl filled with brown, yellow and green pencils, and next to this a round india-rubber with an elephant as trade-mark. Felix looked up at the cloudless sky. There was no sign of aeroplanes. The wireless had only announced the approach of single fast aircraft; Felix had no wish to go down into the cellar. His packed suitcase stood next to the desk and his coat lay ready on the back of the chair.

Felix sat down in front of the aquarium and began dropping ants-eggs into the glass food-ring which swam on the water. The fishes rose to the surface to snatch the food. A delicate smell of seaweed and of other water plants floated over the acquarium and reminded one of a sleepy river bank at mid-day. Felix remembered the pond of his child-hood where he had caught sweet calamus and salamanders. He remembered the brown guppies, the sparkling water-spiders, the still-ness around him. He lay there motionless. A fat glittering fish raced across the mirrors of the pond and caused the water to ripple. He could see the transparent light-green dragonflies against the dark stormy sky. The raindrops formed graceful rings and figures on the water. The road home used to smell of dust and damp wood and farther along of sand, and pavements and an occasional whiff of petrol.

AT home his father asked what he had caught in the pond, and Felix showed him his jar with the frightened little fish. It had been his father who had made his first aquarium for him. Felix could still see his muscular arm on which tiny silvery bubbles appeared as he reached into the water to make small holes in the sandy bottom with his finger and then carefully placed a plant into each hole. Then he would slip the fish out of the jar into a small gauze net and place the net inside the aquarium; the fishes began circling and wriggling out and then dashed wildly along the glass container to the corner under the water-thermometer where they stood still at the bottom quivering with fright. But soon they began to look fatter and shinier and later on they would play games, dashing in and out of the forest of plants, chasing one another and sliding with swift movements along the glass pane to which clung tiny purple-coloured snails. His father wiped his arm, rolled down his shirt-sleeve, put on his jacket and lit his pipe. Felix looked up at him admiringly. His aquarium was much more beautiful than the one at school in the headmaster's hall where the stuffed squirrel lived. His father smiled and was happy because Felix was happy.

Now, one could hear the din of a distant engine. Felix leant out of the window, but he could only see a single plane flying very high. He sat down again in front of the

aquarium. The slender tittlebats, the zebra-fishes, always on the move, shot through the sunrays. They were of a steel-blue colour with silver stripes. On the other hand, the half-moon shaped danios, the sailing-fish from the Amazones, moved along slowly. Their sickle-shaped fins were longer even than their oval-shaped bodies and had velvety black stripes across a yellow background. All these floating animals glittered in a mixture of yellow, bronze, brown and gold. They looked as though they might rise out of the glass container and disappear into the air in a soundless swarm. Felix had found them a little uncanny when his father had first given them to him. But it was the peaceful, languid and sensitive animals that Felix liked best, not the strong Polynesian fish of prey. A glass pane separated them from the others. They were of a deep red with glowing blue stripes. Their large scarlet tail fins had blue and violet edges. They were just a mass of colour and only the tiny sticklebacks surpassed them in brightness. These looked as though studded with precious stones as they sparkled in crimson, gold-green and emerald-blue through the immovable forest of plants.

THE water glittered in the sun. Felix touched the cool glass pane. The fishes rose and fell past his face as it made a mirror of the glass pane. The face grew old. It was the face of his father. His father had been dead long ago. He had been a tall broad-shouldered man with grey eyes. Felix was slender and dark. A Macropode floated across his forehead. The face altered. Felix now saw the face of a stranger; as he looked into the water of the aquarium he could see a stranger whom he thought he knew, and yet had never seen before. He did not know who it was.

"Do you know me?" questioned the stranger.

"No," said Felix.

"Yes, you do," said the stranger.

"I do not recognize you," said Felix.

"This is a fine aquarium," said the stranger.

"Yes," replied Felix.

"Cold," said the stranger, and then repeated: "Cold and beautiful, these pretty little prisons . . ."

The voice died away.

"I do not understand you," said Felix.

"Try to remember," murmured the monotonous voice, "the flat pool. Samoa. The running water at La Plata. The white ponds in the moonlight; the sun over the great river. The reeds by the stream, the fishes leaping. Can you remember? Can you still hear that fat shining fish?"

"Where does this voice come from?" asked Felix.

"I am talking," said the voice; "talking to you."

"It is me talking to myself," said Felix.

"Yes," said the stranger behind the aquarium.

THE fishes rose and dived again. The red snails crawled slowly along the glass pane. A tiny swordfish gasped for air. It was bright green with violet and golden blue mother of pearl markings. A red line ran from the gill to the top of the unnaturally long belly-fins, as if it were piercing through the transparent body.

"Sometimes I dream of aquariums," said Felix. "I dream that the fish die."

The buzzing noise of the engine grew louder and then died away again. The red snails crawled along very slowly, as slowly as though the minutes were moving along the glass wall. The fishes were breathing; the macropodes had violet, aster-coloured fins with a touch of gold in them; little silvery bubbles rose to the surface and disappeared.

"You will have to put in some fresh plants," said the father.

"Yes," said Felix.

"You will have to keep the aquarium in good condition," said the father, "otherwise the fish will perish. It is up to you."

"Yes, father," said Felix.

"It is yours. It is your world. You must keep it in order. You have let the plants go

rotten; you should be more careful. That pane of glass is dirty. An aquarium must be kept clean."

"Yes, father," said Felix.

"Your mother will give you a wire brush and you will have to scrub the seaweeds."

AT this moment Felix realized once more that his father was dead; he remembered the stranger and heard again his voice:

"You will have to part with it," said the voice.

"No," said Felix.

"No, it is true one does not really part," said the stranger, "but you know what is coming? The time is up."

"What time?" asked Felix. "Whose time?"

"Are you afraid?" asked the stranger. "I touched the aquarium."

"I touched it," said Felix. "I touched it myself. I do not understand you?"

"Yes," said the stranger, "your aquarium is beautiful. It *was* beautiful. Well kept. In good order—made of glass."

"Sometimes I am afraid," said Felix.

"It won't be for long," said the stranger. "You will have to part with a great deal But did you not want to be *free*?"

"I am tired," said Felix.

"I spoke to you the other day at the pond," said the stranger. "Have you forgotten?"

"It was myself," said Felix.

"It was," said the stranger.

"Tired," said Felix. "Sometimes in one's dream one knows that one is asleep. The fish are flying around the room. I know that they are in the aquarium and cannot fly. Yet I can see them fly; oh, yes, I know I can. Are you still there?"

FELIX'S forehead touched the cool glass pane of the aquarium. It made him jump. He sat up and listened. The noise of the engines grew louder.

I have been asleep, thought Felix. I might have fallen fast asleep. As it is, I have been dreaming; though it was not a real dream. It was something different. It may be the fever beginning again.

Felix was often feverish, ever since he had been wounded. His leg hurt him but he had become used to it.

Drowsy and feverish, just like in an aquarium. I already used to feel like this as a child, Felix thought; no, it could not have been a dream, could it? But it does not matter, anyway. It is all nonsense, and I should be going down to the cellar. Something tells me I should go. But it is ridiculous to go underground when only single reconnoitring planes have been announced. Not even an air-raid warning. It is very silly, yet something tells me I should go.

UNDECIDED he stood in the room, his coat over his arm. As he bent down to pick up his suitcase the bomb fell.

The window-frame came crashing into the room; a hailstorm of glass rattled and banged and crashed; the bookshelf fell down; Felix was thrown against the wall. At the very moment when terror overcame him he knew that the bomb had burst in front of the house, that it was a small bomb, and that the house was untouched—almost untouched.

The aquarium was smashed to pieces. The fish quivered on the floor and squirmed in the pool of mud, wet sand, green seaweed and glass splinters. One fish lay on a small table which had not been overturned. It quivered and then leapt far into the room. The small half-moon shaped danio lay squashed flat on the ground. The swordfish jumped up rhythmically as if under electric shock and then shot across the wet floor.

Felix ran into the hall to fetch the emergency pail of water. He picked up the fish and threw them into the pail. He no longer had that cool, swift, refreshing feeling of being under water as he touched them; they were merely quivering bits of flesh which made him shudder with disgust and helpless

fear. Some of the swordfish were already dead. Felix searched for the fish under the writing desk, under the overturned bookcase; some of them slid through his fingers. One of the macropodes had got squashed in a book like a bookmarker. Felix groped around in the mud, scattering the seaweed about the room. Then he remembered that the water in the pail was tap water. The tropical fish would die in cold water. Possible a few tittlebats would survive, they were tough. He could not find all the fish. As he walked towards the door he stepped on the light green swordfish with the bright red stripes. There was a crunching noise. Felix slipped. His hip began to hurt badly.

AT that moment came the second explosion and a narrow, dagger-shaped incendiary bomb crashed through the roof and fell in a cloud of mortar by the writing-desk, bored through the floor, gave a loud bang and flared up, throwing a sheaf of flames into the room. The room was enveloped in thick smoke. The globe fell off the desk, rolled across the floor, blazed and vanished in smoke.

Felix picked up the pail with the fish and poured the entire contents over the burning bomb. By now it was easy to extinguish the flame. For a long time Felix could not forget how the snails had hissed in the fire and then burst with a little spurting crack; and how the swell of the water had carried the little red fish into the flames.

THE ROMANTIC BIAS OF EUROPEAN ARCHITECTURE

By ROBERT LUTYENS

IF the South Bank Exhibition of the Festival of Britain does nothing else, it is likely to produce a body of architecture, not only positive and organic in itself, but on the whole strange to the British public which has witnessed so little new building since the outbreak of the war. Whilst repudiating the worst aspects of functionalism, it may equally appear to have turned its back for ever on the romantic emphasis of the past; and for this reason alone it might seem appropriate to examine beforehand the fundamental characteristics of European Architecture in relation to the development of our social institutions.

A great deal of confusion in the appreciation of architecture lies in the persistent fallacy of regarding it, without qualification, as a fine art existing in its own right. It is not even an applied art, in the accepted sense of that term, in many of its manifestations, but a technique of construction. Yet it continues to be judged, and so in a manner misjudged, by the standards we are accustomed to apply to individual works of imagination. There is plenty of excuse for this. In the first place, Renaissance architects, like Brunelleschi, Vignola, and Michaelangelo were artists who regarded architecture as an art of free expression, largely independent of structural necessity, and so elevated the form of their buildings to a plane hitherto reserved for sculpture and decoration. They were, in fact, sculptors and painters, and not as yet designers of organic buildings, as were the Romans from whom they derived their classical models; while they lacked the inspired empiricism of the gothic masons.

Buildings are well able to assert their claim as works of art to a persuasive and universally acknowledged beauty—at best an ambiguous attribute. They may display in their handling a high degree of imagination. They are interpretative of their age, and reveal the aspirations of their builders. Yet the quality of imagination in architecture will be found, on examination, to be one of arrangement rather than creative, except in so far as it gives tangible expression to specific social usages, such as pageantry or religious observance. Many of the components of architectural beauty—the endowments of time and change and of association—are fortuitous in a way in which they cannot be, for instance, in painting. Finally, buildings cannot anticipate the material needs they are erected to expound. Their function is affirmative only.

Great architecture consists of the assured method of doing something in a particular way in order to obtain a predetermined result. That is to say, the art lies more in the contriving than in the nature of the thing to be contrived, which is governed by factors largely extraneous to it. The pinnacles of New York are, in silhouette, only different in scale from the fourteenth century towers of San Gimignano: they are both picturesque and inordinately romantic, and originated in the same physical compulsion; but they can claim no special architectural distinction. The reflection of the setting sun on rose-red Queen Anne brickwork vivifies the façade of a vanished epoch. Works of architecture have invariably arisen, within their technical limitations, in response to the moral and material requirements of society, and their special character has resulted from the attitude of society to those requirements. And it is for this reason that the judgments we pass on them (unless we are technically equipped, as

very few are, and even then expert criticism has no wider validity) are historical and social judgments. Nor is it necessary to look far for corroboration. For when, following the collapse of traditional forms under the impact of the industrial revolution, architecture became the agent of the new money power engaged in the perpetration of squalid industrial cities, music, coincidentally, was aspiring to fresh altitudes of spiritual perception, and French impressionist painting was soon to open magic casements on imaginative experience which can never again be closed.

ARCHITECTURE has been for too long tacitly accepted as the mother of the arts —as an art uniquely favoured, and the purest manifestation of creative genius. And so in a manner it is. The question is one primarily of definition. Yet define a work of fine art as one may, if Titian's *Bacchus and Ariadne* is such a work, then Santa Maria della Salute is at least totally different, even if both are the inspired embodiment, in J. Addington Symond's phrase, of a great idea. One is the direct statement of an individual artist. In the other the role of the architect—at many removes from any personal impression on the execution—was more like that of the conductor of a modern orchestra—an inexact simile even if it is extended to a composer conducting his own work, the architect's "score" being no more than a diagrammatic instruction to a builder in which much more is assumed than stated. It is inconceivable, for instance, that actual drawings, or anything approximating to them, were used by the classical temple builders. Ictinus and Callicrates have been described as the architects of the Parthenon. But the Parthenon is itself a work of assembled sculpture, designed to house a sculptured deity by the hand of a master, like Phidias; while the subtleties of Greek curvature can have been achieved only by means of verbal instructions given to slave artisans, and were gradually evolved by process of trial and error in order, by correcting the optical illusion of lassitude, to enhance the appearance of poised and massive strength.

The great romanesque and gothic churches —among the loveliest works of historical architecture—were solely the productions of mason-craftsmen, the architect, as he is thought of to-day, being neither available nor required. And at the Renaissance, and throughout the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, although architects were employed, they were eclectics who, more especially in Italy, considered buildings as spatial compositions designed for the display of virtuosity in detail and embellishment, or were otherwise intent on exploring—hesitantly at first and later under enlightened patronage—the significant tendencies of the ripening age they lived in. And even towards the end of the seventeenth century, when the professional architect-designer came into his own, having absorbed the several dialects of his art and being thus able to express himself in confident and original idiom—even then the mass of agreeable domestic architecture remained the work of anonymous builders, who were content to perpetuate the traditions of social custom in which their apprenticeship was served.

It would be an exaggeration to maintain that architecture, at its best, is not, in fact, an art demanding the exercise of the very highest talent. Yet even in its technical aspect it differs widely from the other arts in as much as it is concerned with the control and demonstration of natural laws. Aesthetically it has more in common with them, in that hitherto it was obliged, as in the case of stylized verse forms or conventional representation in painting, to secure expression within the disciplines imposed by the use of the classic orders. Indeed, their extraordinarily persistent influence must always be borne in mind when considering the degree of imaginative latitude which was granted to the traditional masters; because here in particular is architecture unlike her sister arts.

The Piazza of St. Peter's and the twin domes of Greenwich are astonishing feats of

imaginative skill, not only because of their designers' ability to ring the changes on classical themes without departing from the rigid canon or orthodoxy, but also because, through the relationship of scale and distance to the existing buildings to which they became integral additions, they are the positive affirmations of an integrated and consistent pattern of civilized life. Geometry, on which architecture is based, is a science of measurement. Three-dimensional building gives elevation to a plan; and a plan is the physical expression of a way of living. Buildings are, after all, places in and with which we live, and not merely things to look at. The grasp of this elementary fact is essential to the understanding of architecture. Whatever degree of emancipation from a mortifying classicism may be claimed by contemporary designers, their buildings are still governed by structural laws and by the function, extended through improvements in constructional techniques, which they are designed to fulfil. And then there is something more.

GEOFFREY SCOTT'S analysis of the architecture of humanism was incomplete as a description of the buildings that have characterized our civilization. The qualities he found in buildings derived from classical sources are universal, not particular ones. He cited the testimony of common speech in order to show how inveterate is our tendency to project the image of our functions into concrete form, when we say that domes "swell", that spires "rise", that vistas "stretch" and that arches "spring". We look in buildings for balances and symmetries corresponding to our own. Doorways are vertical because we walk erect. Bases are given stability, and storied superstructures repose. His error was one of prejudice in refusing to acknowledge the same principle as animating buildings in which the classical aesthetic is absent, because classical buildings, like classical sculpture, were more obviously at pains to demonstrate the physical aspect of functional humanism. Yet the gothic cathedrals, which Scott dismissed as works of primitive magic, are just as revealing of the spiritual nature of man, and, indeed, their dynamic assertion of a supernatural function has far more generic affinity with Renaissance and baroque architecture than have the latter with the Greek and Roman buildings whose superficial detail was employed at the conclusion of the Middle Ages to express an entirely different emotional need.

The differences between medieval and, say, sixteenth century architecture are the adventitious differences of historical growth and origin. Their similarities, on the other hand, are those of an inalienable kinship of evolving ideas. The medieval churches grew out of the Roman basilica under Byzantine influence. The form-detail of Renaissance buildings arose from the rediscovery of the intellectual grammar of the antique world. In spirit, and in their attitude to time, place, and reality, they are both equally unclassical. The neo-classicism of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, which attempted to reassert the style origins of the tradition it was in the process of repudiating, was just as "romantic" as the pastiches of the gothic revival. The free-statuary of the Porte Royale of Chartres cathedral and the terminal figures surmounting the attic story of a Palladian palace are of the same order of spiritual idealization. And, this being so, the criteria of literary and aesthetic humanism are insufficient as a means of describing the consistent and innate character of European building, which has maintained an exiguous existence even to the present day.

IT is almost a truism to say that architecture can exist independently of an architect. The only contribution of such a statement to criticism lies in the distinction it seeks to establish between buildings and those works of art which must be, by their nature, individually inspired. This is no disparagement of individual talent or of the felicity of particular idiom; yet only confusion can

result from a propensity to discover unique properties in buildings instead of looking for their correspondencies, because it is just this that tends to exclude the users of buildings from a decisive influence on their design—a modern tendency, partly due to an exaggerated deference to the spurious claims of artistic separatism, and partly to the breakdown of inherited patterns of behaviour, which is directly responsible for the uncertainty of popular taste. By attempting to impose standards, not only of taste, but of amenity, many modern schools of architecture are at least at variance with the practice of their predecessors, who sought instead, and so far as they were consulted, to interpret feeling rather than to dominate it. Professional theories of living may be right or they may be wrong: they are certainly irreconcilable. Yet, in the end, the predicates "right" and "wrong" can only be affirmed by those who, individually or collectively, use buildings to express a desirable way of living. Whatever absolute aesthetic principles may be held to adhere to works of art generally, in architecture at least there are few. Between the Great Pyramid and the Rockefeller Centre there is, apart from their size, nothing in common beyond the facts that both were fabricated by human agency, and in both the apex is smaller than the base.

Intuitive classifications are repugnant to scholarship. The over-simplifications resulting from the attempt to compress historical data into pattern-groupings are necessarily suspect because they rely, more or less, upon selected evidence. On the other hand, to record the history of art in terms of the derivatives of succeeding periods is as unintelligible as is social history punctuated with the dates of succeeding dynasties. St. Sophia was no less pagan because it was built as a Christian shrine, and Byzantine art bears no true relation to the romantic art to which it bequeathed an unassimilable sophistication. The romanesque architecture of Ravenna, despite the resemblance of borrowed forms, emerges unmistakably as something new, while gothic marks a further stage in the material expression of a gathering social force of enormous potency. Again, the arbitrary line of demarcation drawn for convenience between medieval and modern Europe is equally without foundation in experience if we can trust, for instance, the evidence of unmistakable unity in the dome of Florence Cathedral crowning the long gothic nave. They were both produced by the same sort of people.

The steeples of Wren's London churches are romantic in inspiration even if they rely on classical quotations. Set within the ruined portico of the Temple of Antonino and Faustina in Rome is a baroque church, whose derivatives are entirely classical, and yet they are not on speaking terms. And this is not less true because the "folk" element present in all early, popular art was followed, as Lewis Mumford deplores, by the patronage of a privileged class—that is by men of taste"who had read the classic treatises and memorized the classic rules." The recurrent divorce between popular and sophisticated art is incidental to social crystallization, and is applicable equally to the Athens of Pericles and to the city-states of Renaissance Italy. Cultivation is a process of selection and specialization. What, however, has hitherto distinguished Western European architecture from that of other civilizations—from Rheims, through the Basilica of Vicenza and Versailles to the modern cathedrals of commerce—is the inflexion with which it asserts the dominant bias of European genius—vehement, impulsive, romantic.

INTERPRETATION is, after all, a form of subjective evaluation, and only communicable through a similarity of outlook. What we feel about a thing is capable of demonstration but not of proof. As far as the interpretation of European architecture goes, the question really resolves itself into this: are our intuitive assessments of such a kind as to justify a certain hypothesis? If so, corroborative evidence may be found to fall piece by

piece into place. The attempt to describe something in terms of something else—one art in terms of another—is always dangerous, and the emotional response to the evocative, associative quality in music and the plastic arts is at best unreliable. Yet to say that brick vaulting spread from the Euphrates valley or that Rome introduced the Tuscan entablature is to state facts of no more than academic interest. They fail to illustrate a point of view and are uncommunicative except to specialists. But the stones of ancient cities are eloquent if we can discern men's features in the things they built and dwelt in; if we can discover in their homes and in their churches some indication of the way they lived and worshipped; if we can trace the movement of their minds in the characteristic cunning of their hands.

The things they did and the means they used are the tokens of what they were. And the things we do and build to-day are no less revealing of the stress and tension and adjustments of our public and private lives. There is no coherence in the text-book presentation of the medieval Christian world, from the fourth to the fourteenth centuries, as the continuous progress of a civilization from the dark ages of paganism into the noon-day of enlightenment, vitalized by the ferment of a new creed and rising in the sixth century to the mature achievements of Byzantine art, of their kind unequalled in any age, only to fall back to the lovely essays of inspired childishness.

At the collapse of the Empire, Rome remained the venerable repository of a tremendous heritage. Latin was the tongue of scholarship. Latin became the language of Christian liturgy. And so it was that education, through ecclesiastical schools, consisted primarily of training for the religious life; while, through its monastic foundations, the arts of letters, music and architecture advanced in harness to the service of the church. The monasteries rang with learned and equivocal controversy. But only with the growth of secular education did there become audible the murmur of an intellectual conflict of far greater portent. For, with the distinction between *schola claustri* and *schola exterior*, there arose the sense of moral contamination lurking in secular learning. If the catholic fathers were sacred, the classical poets—the fountain-heads of scholarship—were profane. If theology was a fit subject for pious study, the liberal arts—at best the means to an end—contained more than a suspicion of dangerous vanity. And in this tendency to humiliate the material world, corrupt and corruptible, in order to extol some impalpable vision of a world redeemed, there lies the fundamental idiosyncrasy of the romantic spirit, which began thus soon to spin the web of its own imprisonment.

The sense of eternal opposition between heaven and earth, body and soul, lies at the root of all romantic art and imagery. Secular education grew steadily during the ninth and tenth centuries; the arts assumed an ever greater measure of independence; Latin came gradually to be replaced by a written vernacular. Yet the conflict—this duality—is implicit throughout the literature of the Middle Ages, and has dominated the thought of Europe ever since. Indeed, it is the source of all contradiction, the spur to self-immolating idealism, the torment of lonely introspection, the cause and frustration of romantic love. And it is here that St. Francis brought to the conflict between the world and the world-to-be a passionate acceptance. The ideal and the real still stood hopelessly apart; but now in the one the other was redeemed, and therefore lovable, being of God. And in Franciscan mysticism is to be found, not only the beginnings of an imaginative pantheism, but a true indication of the direction of western art. For, while the nature of art was being laboriously debated in the schools, art itself was developing unconsciously in its own way. All that throughout the material universe was lovable was thereby lovely. Beauty might be an illusion; it was justified if only it offered an allurement to those who might come later to perceive the truth, triumphant and unadorned.

So earthly beauty, distrusted by a rigid clericalism, was invested with a hedonist quality, which—for all it continued to provoke an awed surmise—came, at the Renaissance, to be worshipped for itself alone. The artistic instinct preceded the artistic conscience. The result of the church's opposition was to retard the development of what may be called the conceptual arts of literature and painting. And thus it was that architecture—that is, ecclesiastical architecture—and music, which was capable of expressing a deep intangible sentiment, gained an early ascendancy.

IN 1066 a minstrel, Taillefer, rode at the head of the Norman army to the Battle of Hastings, chanting the *Chanson de Roland*. And thence we see the songs of the troubadours—the Arthurian romances, *Tristan*, the canzoni of Arnaut Daniel and Bertrans de Born—spring up, flower-like, to star the fields of chivalry. In castle and in tavern, by winter rush-light and on still summer evenings, the Provençal minstrels sang their tender and defiant songs—of constant and inconstant love, of high service and ideal nobility: new renderings of more ancient tales. And the echo of these songs is mingled with the clatter of horsemen and the tramp of mercenaries, weaving a lyric thread amid the gaiety and squalor, courage and rapacity, the pillage and the piety of the crusades.

Now, if I am right and these are the origins of the romantic tradition, how did it proceed? It has been pointed out that if Chaucer and Petrarch (Renaissance figures both) were contemporaries, the former was also a contemporary, in all essentials, with Gloucester Cathedral. The spire of Beauvais was still abuilding in 1570. This dates the high-water mark of Venetian painting, by which time western Europe had become a self-conscious entity—socially, politically and in the field of art. The succeeding stages of an uninterrupted process, culminating in the superlative achievements of French classic architecture, are not difficult to trace. Here the romantic accent is unmistakable. There is no way of proving the essential identity of inspiration in such dissimilar things as the early seventeenth century Blickling, which is a building as nearly ethereal and bodiless as bricks and mortar can be, and the metaphysical poetry of the same period: their spiritual affinity must be felt or dismissed as make-believe. Both had their roots in the romantic dualism of the Middle Ages.

In the same way rococo, which was the partially concluding phase of a great age, echoes in arabesque and pilaster, and in the attempted painting of light itself, the exuberance of gothic tracery. And existing co-extensively with the art and architecture which sprang directly from it, the development of technical, social and political organization reveals the same superabundant, often perverse vitality of which no comprehensive adjective except "romantic" is really descriptive—whether we look, for instance, to the growth of power oligarchies and their appurtenances, to cabinet diplomacy, to dynastic wars and a money economy, and to the strange manifestations of aspiring humanist learning allied to the grossest corruption; or to such symbols of the romantic spirit as the compassionate delineation of character in a Dutch portrait, to historical research, to the extremes of luxury and degradation going hand in hand, to theological speculation, and to the introversions of psychological literature. The patterned tapestry of European civilization is infinitely diverse, contradictory, and often irrational. Yet to separate its component incidents and give them special tags is to destroy comprehension of the picture as a whole; and although "romantic" is commonly applied to one phase only of an organic historical design, its significance lies—in all great movements as in all great art—in the endorsement of our particular experience. European architecture must be regarded as the epitome of the total experience of European man; while the texture of society was, until not so long ago, a homogeneous pattern into which the subtly blended colours

of artistic effort were woven. Nor, it would seem, is the inspiration exhausted. The late romanticism, which grew out of an expanding sense of landscape and a wider prospect of human liberty, and which led to various picturesque revivals throughout the nineteenth century, survives in many aspects of our experience to-day. We are heirs to the future as well as to the past.

THE argument stands or falls solely by the test of probability. The principles which emerge from the study of ancient and modern architecture are more than the sum of a vast quantity of miscellaneous data. They are these: that the architecture of the past maintained a continuity of tradition, and that it expressed the tendencies of the society whose requirements it precisely served; that the beauty of architecture is, on the whole, associative, not only by reason of the use to which buildings are put, but in the humanist sense of their scale, proportion and "movement", and that it is intrinsic only in so far as it is beautifully endowed, whether naturally or by way of the materials and decorations employed; that the architecture of the future can have no existence apart from the men and women who are to use and enjoy it; and that the only architecture that can be used and enjoyed is that which is a spontaneous assertion of the emotional and material needs of a vital and progressive community, and not a rationalized abstraction. Tradition is the means by which we advance, because in discarding it (if, indeed, it were possible to do so) we are rejecting inherited experience, and are thus obliged to start at the beginning all over again. It has been said that in an artist's work tradition is a development from the influence of his master to the flowering of his own work. One must be a student of one's own talent before becoming a master of it. Beauty occurs when all the conditions are propitious. It is served by technical excellence, but never commanded by it. Leaving aside all the recondite theories of aesthetic appreciation, we judge buildings, first of all, by reference to the symbolism of their function, rather than by their technical competence, when we say that a house is "gracious", that a public building is "austere", or that a Cotswold village is picturesque.

THE manors and hamlets of rural England, time-honoured two centuries ago, record a way of living that still seems to us serene and admirable. It is what they stand for that moves us, not so much what they are; while the natural beauties of cottage gardens, creeper-clad brickwood, and wood-smoke issuing from ancient chimneys—or, farther afield, the splash of Roman fountains on sultry evenings—these qualities are superadded to whatever merit there may be in the buildings themselves. And surely our response to modern buildings similarly arises from acceptance or repudiation of the kind and conditions of life that they imply? An unfamiliar factor enters in here because there are available to us new skills which we have not as yet learnt how to use. Reaction to the desire of intellectual coteries to alter our ways of living to suit constructional and aesthetic theory is violently divergent: enthusiastic approval, on the one hand, is met with anxious retreat to sentimentality on the other. These are the fluctuations, more or less, of fashionable instability: the mass of the people are involved vicariously or not at all. But we must all be conscious of the manifestations of architectural beauty in the modern world, not only in certain conspicuous works of architecture, but in, for example, the decency and order that are beginning to spring up from the crumbling degradation of the slums, in the vivid animation of city river frontages, in great harbour installations, air fields and recreation grounds; and, at the other extreme, in the assured and lovely development of modern domestic gardening.

Arising out of the materialism of the nineteenth century and the calamities of the recent past we may detect on every hand at least some determination to rededicate the

places of human habitation—to precisely what end and with what success, who shall say? Difficulties, frustrations and vulgarities abound; the human situation has reached a stage of unparalleled crisis; self-mistrust is a commonplace of contemporary thought. Yet the will to rise above the disasters that have befallen us, to reaffirm the essential conditions of human life—*to achieve nobility*—is urgent and unmistakable. And wherever we are able to acknowledge the attainment of beauty in modern buildings we may be sure that we are witnessing a solution, if only temporary and partial, of some of the problems of human conduct.

IF a new, popular art ever arises it will bear very little resemblance to the popular arts of antiquity. The vernacular or folk art of the middle ages was vivid and spontaneous, although its indications have been mistaken, I feel sure, by many authorities. It was based on a simple, restricted craftsmanship, always seeking in its humbler forms to imitate the more accomplished artifice of the master-craftsman, and was seldom self-sufficing, as William Morris and Ruskin believed. There can be little reasonable doubt that the primitive painters strove after naturalism, just as rural craftsmen endeavoured to do better than they knew how with limited means. Staffordshire pottery is, by any reckoning, less perfect than Sèvres; the *commedia dell'arte* was the precursor, not a competitor of the theatre of Shakespeare. The old popular art displayed an ingenuous pleasure in its own contriving — an engaging and endearing quality which may well have led to its over-valuation; but it was incapable of developing beyond the simplicities by which it was contained.

On the other hand, whatever conception we may have of a new popular art, it seems evident that its sources of creativeness will no longer lie in the common, as distinct from the aristocratic life: it will represent the the highest attainments of a national culture and will not be derivative from some other, higher standard of excellence. It is impossible to foretell its direction; but it cannot fail, if it arises at all, to be different from any of the arts that have preceded it, because, hitherto, the distinction between the many and the few, between a small privileged class which achieved an exclusive standard of cultivation and the masses who ministered to its needs, has been invariable. That situation is passing forever. The result must be a wide diffusion of artistic appreciation, while success in the production of works of art by any largely egalitarian society will depend upon its capacity to throw up leaders who, although remaining of the people, are yet exceptionally endowed.

THE apparent conflict between the romantic and the functionalist gives few indications of reality. At the same time there are signs that the old romanticism may be dying under the shock of desperate catastrophe. Yet something, it seems, of its undefeated spirit—chastened and refined—will live on into the age that lies ahead. The old dualism may become at last reconciled. We have learnt too much from the past to be swayed for long by doctrines born of epidemic despair. What men may discover in the future is how individual self-fulfilment can remain compatible with the limitation of excessive privilege. The artist must feel his way towards a new synthesis. The architect, instructed by the people, must embody in his buildings a new conception of human association if his work is to attain validity. The flux of social experiment will have had to solidify and assume a vital, organic shape before architecture can have anything really of importance to say. Recently it has been too apt merely to proclaim platitudes from ferro-concrete roof-tops.

Theatre

ENGLISH & INTERNATIONAL

By HUBERT GRIFFITH

KNIGHTS OF MADNESS (Crazy Gang). *Victoria Palace.*

THE PLATINUM SET, by Reginald Denham and Mary Orr. *Saville.*

BALLET IMPERIAL, by Balancine. *Covent Garden.*

AMONG my more pleasant occupations, or sinecures, is that of being "Honorary Secretary for Overseas Members" to the Critics' Circle of London.

The Critics' Circle is a small and pleasantly select body that meets for dinner once a year and doesn't really do much else, and its Overseas Members are not numerous—a couple of dozen in New York, and a few more in various European capitals. But the Secretaryship for these can be loosely interpreted—and means, in effect, that various strangers—not necessarily members—from as far afield as Moscow or Budapest do, when in London, from time to time ring me up and ask me what in the London theatrical world I would recommend them to see.

This always presents an interesting problem. For one has, for the moment, to stand "outside" the London theatrical world, to take, as it were, a God's-eye view of it from afar and aloft, and to try to decide from the point of view of the visiting stranger, with perhaps only one or two evenings to spare, what *is*, for best and for worst, most truly characteristic of the London stage.

When the time is summer-time, and particularly in a burst of fine weather, the problem solves itself automatically—"Go to the Open-Air Theatre in Regent's Park." Any one of Shakespeare's pastoral plays, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* or *As You Like It*, or *The Tempest*, played in that enchanting amphitheatre, with the bats and the homing birds and the Moon herself taking part in it, has the quality of absolute magic.

But it is not yet summer—my teeth are still chattering from a recent hurricane-swept day that I spent at some Easter Point-to-Point races—and failing the delights of the Open-Air Theatre I would say to the visitor within our gates, unhesitatingly, "Go to the Crazy Gang, at the Victoria Palace, in a newly-staged diversion called *Knights of Madness*."

Why? Part of their excitement is that their qualities cannot be pin-pointed in print. Who can say exactly why he finds the Marx Brothers funny? Personally I don't, and it is not through lack of trying—for I find that many of my more intellectual acquaintances are continually making up parties to drive down to some remote suburban cinema where an "early" Marx Brothers film is being resurrected. But I have stopped asking them by now why they find the Marx Brothers funny. They merely shake their heads sadly at me; and I therefore ask you to take it on trust that I and countless thousands of other Englishmen find the Crazy Gang—the great Bud Flannagan with that generous, expansive personality of his that comes pouring and purring across the footlights, Nervo and Knox with their india-rubber athletics, Naughton and Gold, born to be Broker's Men as they have been in a score of pantomimes—extremely funny. Perhaps the word "Englishness" is the clue. Perhaps it might be wrong to send the foreigner there, for unless he were extremely perceptive, he might be mystified? But then again, allowing that he *might* be perceptive, I think he would get from them some clue that helped him to understand the English outlook on life slightly better — that pointed, if he were really

supersensitive, to a line of grotesque humour that traces its descent, through Dickens and through Rowlandson, back to the august creator of Pistol and Falstaff himself. At any rate, I suggest that a visit to the Victoria Palace, with the Crazy Gang in full spate, is part of a liberal education.

M. GEORGES BALANCINE'S ballet, *Ballet Imperial*, at Covent Garden, shows off a less-known side of the English character—its acceptance and appreciation of internationalism. Balancine is a choreographer trained in the Imperial Russian school, who worked for Diaghilev in Monte Carlo and de Basil in London, creating such ballets as *The Triumph of Neptune* and the ever-lovely *Cotillon*. He has been resident in America for the last twenty years. His latest ballet to be seen here is danced, and danced superbly, by an almost entirely English company, Margot Fonteyn, Beryl Grey, and the others, trained up by an Irish girl—in spite of her French name—Ninette de Valois. The music is Tchaikovsky's. The decor is by Eugene Berman, born in Tsarist St. Petersburg, and trained in Italy and Paris.

The work, coming as it does from all these odd sources, makes a homogeneous and enchanting whole. The purists might object that it murders Tchaikovsky's music, his "G" Major Piano Concerto. But, in a sense, this is what Tchaikovsky was born for. The supreme music of the world cannot be danced to. When Massine made Beethoven's Seventh Symphony into a ballet, the result was a failure. The music had said everything itself already, and dancing was superfluous. But Tchaikovsky's Sixth Symphony (danced to the ballet *Les Prêsages*) and the present Concerto, pour out an effortless and lovely stream of melody that fits the dancing as the glove to a hand.

I am making no exaggerated claim on patriotic grounds alone, when I say that I believe our Covent Garden company to be the equal of any ballet company in the world, and possibly the best of them all. No company that has come out of Paris in recent years can challenge comparison with them. When our Covent Garden company went to America last year, the New York critics admitted that they were seeing dancing of a quality that they had almost forgotten since the great Diaghilev days. I cannot compare them with the companies of Leningrad and Moscow, for I have had no knowledge of these for the last ten years. Up to that time, that is to say up to 1939, I had followed their progress with attention for several years. It seemed to me that the whole of the Tsarist technique, the finest ballet-training in the world, had been taken over lock, stock and barrel. The training was as long and as careful and as skilled as it had ever been. In this respect the present-day students of the Mariinsky and the Bolshoi Theatres are probably "stronger" and more advanced than the majority of the students of our own, semi-adolescent company. But the Russians seemed to be producing no choreographers—that is to say, ballet-inventors—of note. The main bulk of the repertory depended on the classics, on Tchaikovsky's *Swan Lake* and Tchaikovsky's *Sleeping Princess*. A new, post-Revolutionary ballet, *Krasnii Mak* (*The Red Poppy*), "angled" from the Communist slant, was just about as bad as any ballet can well be that is angled from any political slant. And a new excursion into the fields of romance, *Bakcheraiskii Fontan* (*The Fountains of Bakchesserai*), based on a Pushkin legend, though beautifully danced by one of the greatest living ballerinas, Madame Ulanova, was not, either in its music or in its choreographic invention, anything outside the ordinary.

To put the point into a few very pointed words:—If the British Council, that is responsible for our artistic prestige abroad, has any superfluous cash on its hands, it should send the Sadler's Wells—Covent Garden Company on an extended tour of foreign capitals. And it should particularly arrange to stage its show in Moscow. It is true that the Muscovites, with their eyes

trained to appreciate the results of at least a couple of centuries of unbroken continuity of ballet-technique, might find our company slightly "immature." I can hear their comments on certain points of ballet technology. But they are also strangely open to the impact of foreign ideas, and I can believe that the Covent Garden Company in Moscow would do certainly no more harm, and probably much more good, than any future conference of Foreign Ministers.

Let the British Council put all their eggs in one basket and give it a trial.

A PLAY that I would take careful precautions to keep every foreign visitor away from, is *The Platinum Set* at the Saville. Luckily, these measures are no longer necessary, since the play gracefully withdrew itself after a run of only a few nights. The London public was simply not interested in going to see it.

It was written by an Englishman of a certain talent, Mr. Reginald Denham, who had made a name for himself as a stage-director of London plays, Mr. Patrick Hamilton's brilliant first play, *Rope*, was among them. About the year 1939 he retired to America, where, the war being then on, he expressed the opinions that England was an effete country, and that he thought that England deserved everything that was coming to it—which was quite a good deal, as you may remember.

However, Mr. Reginald Denham remained in America, making between New York and Hollywood, at least his living expenses; and he has now written *The Platinum Set* that seems to show that he dislikes America at least as much as he disliked England.

The "set" that he discusses is a dormitory-living set of millionaires that keeps its social-climbing wives in Connecticut, and its over-manicured mistresses over the bridge in expensive pent-house apartments in the city of New York. They are all of them of the most appalling boredom. Even the central figure, who is supposed to be the best of a bad bunch, and in the person of Mr. Patrick Barr, still keeps some dim humanity about him, has to say such things, when he is seeking to dismiss his mistress, as "You shan't find that I'm ungenerous to you." (He means that he's going to make her as good an allowance as his circumstances permit. But what a long-winded bore he proclaimed himself in the process.) There is blackmail in the play, twice over; and murder by stabbing, and attempted murder by a young gigolo who is trying to make his rich, elderly wife drink herself to death; and a young painter, presumably of decent status, who paints his wife in the nude, and then affixes the head of a would-be society woman to the study, and tries to get sniggering hush-money out of the society woman in the process . . . In short, the thing was such an exhibition of bad manners and bad taste as I have rarely seen revealed in the London theatre. As always, Anatole France has a word for it, "*Rien ne ne choque, mais il-y-a des choses qui me dégoutent.*" ("Nothing shocks me, but there are things that disgust me.") The phrase is put into the mouth of a little Parisian slut, an actress-in-the-making, in his novel *Histoire Comique*; but it embodies a great truth. There are times when taste is a surer and more accurate guide than morality. *The Platinum Set* didn't shock me, but it disgusted me.

THE SOBIESKI STUARTS

By CHARLES PETRIE

WHEN Henry, Cardinal Duke of York (Henry IX), died in 1807, it was universally believed that the male line of the Stuarts had come to an end with his death, and there was, indeed, every justification for such a belief, for neither by word nor deed had the Cardinal ever betrayed any knowledge of the existence of a legitimate heir other than himself. Furthermore, he gave proof of his conviction that he was the last of his race by his assumption of the royal title, to which he could have had no sort of claim had his brother left a son born in wedlock, while the acknowledgment of the King of Sardinia as his heir is added confirmation of the view he took. In spite, however, of all this, Henry's right to his titular royalty has been challenged, and the theory that Charles and Louise had a son has been seriously put forward. That a number of people have been found to accept this contention is proof of the hold which the House of Stuart has never ceased to exercise upon popular imagination in the British Isles, so that it is no exaggeration to say that while, if a man were to declare himself the heir of the Yorkist or Tudor dynasty, he would attract but little attention, yet if he claim to be a Stuart he will find hundreds ready to believe him.

In 1847, there was published in London a book called *The Tales of the Century; or, Sketches of the Romance of History between the Years* 1746 *and* 1846, and the authors were John Sobieski Stuart and Charles Edward Stuart. On the title-page was the following quotation:

> "*Gairm-sa air ais gu luath*
> *Na bliadhnaichean gun tuar bh'ann*

with the somewhat free translation:

> "We call back, Maid of Lutha,
> The years which have rolled away."

The book consisted, or rather consists (for although rare it is still extant), of three stories all directed to prove that Charles had a son by Louise, and they are respectively entitled *The Picture*, *The Red Eagle*, and *The Wolf's Den*.

ACCORDING to these tales, a certain Dr. Beaton, a Jacobite exile, was walking one evening in the year 1773 near the Convent of St. Rosalie, somewhere between Parma and Florence, when a carriage drove past with servants in the royal livery of England, and in it were a man and woman, the former of whom he recognized as Charles. That same night Dr. Beaton was accosted by a stranger in church, and asked to assist at an accouchement; he consented to do so, but was blindfolded until he reached the house that contained his patient, and he was never told the latter's name, though a portrait of James III upon the wall of one of the rooms not unnaturally roused his curiosity. After he had done that for which he had been summoned, Dr. Beaton was sworn to secrecy, and asked to leave the country, presumably either the Grand Duchy of Tuscany or the Duchy of Parma. He went straight to Porto Franconi, and while he was there he saw an announcement in the *Florentine Journal* to the effect that the Countess of Albany was recovering from her recent indisposition. Apparently Dr. Beaton was much given to nocturnal perambulations, for he was walking along the shore near Porto Franconi one evening when he was surprised to see H.M.S. *Albina*, Commodore O'Haloran, lying close in. While he was looking at her, a carriage drove up accompanied by a horseman whom he identified as the stranger who had invoked his professional service; whereupon a boat at once put out from the ship, and a woman, with a baby in her arms, stepped out of the coach; they were taken into the boat, and rowed out to *Albina*, which at once stood out to sea, or, as the book

has it, "bore off slow and still and stately towards the west".

The next scene takes place in the second of the three tales, and the setting of it is obviously laid some years later in the Western Highlands of Scotland. Once again there is a man-of-war lying off shore, and a stranger lands from it in full Highland costume. He is known to the local inhabitants as "The Red Eagle", but his real name is O'Haloran, for he passes as the son of the one-time captain of *Albina*. The rest of the story contains a vivid account of a Highland funeral in the old days, and of a storm in which the hero saves a girl's life at the risk of his own, and the narrative ends with his return to the ship.

THE third tale centres round the Peak district in Derbyshire, and it begins with the entry of a traveller into a cave, where he overhears the details of a plot to kidnap a girl. On his return to the village where he is staying he meets "The Red Eagle", and takes him to dine with Sir Herbert de Raby at Inglewood Hall. A description then follows of the rescue of the abducted lady, who is a daughter of Sir Edward Bruce of Ravenhurst Abbey, by the supposed O'Haloran, and of his marriage with her at Berwick. The date of this wedding is not definitely stated, but from internal evidence it was apparently after 1790.

The long and short of the whole matter, of course, was that these three tales were a somewhat roundabout method of claiming that the father of the authors of the book, who was alive when it was published and had hitherto been known as Thomas Allen, was the son of Charles and Louise, and, in consequence, was *de jure* monarch of England in place of the then reigning sovereign Queen Victoria.

IT is now time to examine this story in the light of ascertainable facts. On October 2nd, 1800, Admiral John Carter Allen, of the British Navy, died at his house in Devonshire Place, London, and by his will, which was dated eight months previous to his death, he left £2,300 to be divided most unequally between his two sons, Thomas and John; of these, the latter received £2,200, while the former, although apparently the elder, had to be content with the remaining £100. According to the clues provided in *The Tales of the Century*, Admiral Allen must be identified with Commodore O'Haloran, and his son, Thomas, with "The Red Eagle". Such was the evidence on which John Sobieski Stuart and Charles Edward Stuart based their claim to be true heirs of the House of Stuart.

When this book appeared, the first criticism which was levelled at it was that Charles could have had no possible reason for concealing the birth of an heir, and that even if he had wished to do so it would have been difficult in the extreme. The few remaining Jacobites were eagerly awaiting the announcement that a Prince of Wales had been born, while the circumstances of his father's birth had been such as to render it imperative for Charles to court the widest publicity on such an occasion. To these objections it was replied that fear of assassination out-weighed every other consideration, and it certainly must be admitted that in their efforts to extirpate the Stuart dynasty the Guelphs, or their ministers, or both, had never shown any disposition to stop short of murder in the hope of achieving their end; *The Tales of the Century* contains a graphic account of the plot against Charles at Würzburg in 1749. However, even if the assumption that the child was hidden for fear of assassination be granted, it is more than a little strange that neither his father nor his mother ever alluded to him again. Charles made no mention of having had a son, while Louise expressly denied she had ever been a mother, and that to Napoleon, a man to whom one could not lie with impunity. Lastly, at the date of the supposed birth Sir Horace Mann was the British representative at Florence, and so important an event could never have taken place without him becoming aware of it. The silence of Charles, the denial of Louise, and the ignorance of Mann, are conclusive proof that Thomas Allen was not the rightful King of England.

IT is thus easy to prove that the mysterious child was not the son of Charles and Louise, and there most writers have been content to let the matter rest, but the subject would appear to call for further consideration. It certainly is more than a little curious that Admiral Allen should have divided his estate so unequally, and his action gives ground for the presumption that provision had already been made for Thomas in some other way. Nor is this all, for his birth certificate has never been discovered, although that of John is in existence. The physical resemblance, too, of the former's two sons to the House of Stuart was very marked, and the fact that they claimed to have fought for France at Dresden, Leipsic and Waterloo, at the last of which battles they say of themselves:

"Their polished points red dripping as they passed,
Dashed two young horsemen through the parting smoke"—

obviously a little strange if they were really the grandsons of a British Admiral. At Leipsic they relate that the Emperor in person decorated Charles Edward for conspicuous bravery in the field.

If the evidence shows conclusively that Thomas Allen was not the legitimate son of Charles, it in no way contradicts the theory that he may have been illegitimate; indeed, every fact which goes to prove that he was not born in wedlock reinforces the argument that he may well have been born out of it. It is by no means improbable that in his disgust at his wife's sterility, Charles may have turned to other charms, and he would naturally attempt to conceal this aberration from Louise and Henry. If it be asked why the child was not acknowledged at the same time as the Duchess of Albany, the reply surely is that, although Charles knew well enough that the by no means censorious world of the later eighteenth century would take a lenient view of a youthful indiscretion, it might not, and his brother most assuredly would not, extend the same tolerance to the open irregularities of a married man in his position. That his grandsons believed in the legitimacy of their origin there can be no manner of doubt; but then so did Monmouth, while, as in his case, the interest lies, not in the claim to royal descent, but in the number of people who came to believe in it.

THOMAS ALLEN'S sons took up their residence in Scotland, where they found some support for their pretensions. They never assumed either royal state or royal titles, but they always conducted themselves as members of a reigning dynasty who wished to preserve their incognito. Their attitude towards the regime under which they lived is described in a letter from the elder brother, John Sobieski, to Dr. Robert Chambers: "We are not mere dramatic characters, except in the drawing-rooms of Edinburgh, the limited and egotistical character of whose members renders them ignorant of our position elsewhere. But their mistress and her ministers are well aware what are the feelings attached to us in France, and for the profound interest and circumstances of extraordinary distinction which attend my brother in Bohemia, particularly from the Church and Army . . . Most of our friends appear to think and I believe really feel, that we are only and nothing but the painted puppets that we appear in their ballrooms. But this must render us the more jealous of committing any follies worthy of such a supposition. It is for this reason that we have abstained, that we will abstain so rigidly, from any assumption or allusion of or to the assassinations, events and persons of former times . . . I also strongly, in the strongest manner, advise that no proceedings may be allowed to go into the newspapers. Your mistress has no doubt many amiable and highly liberal qualities, but she is also violently and constitutionally susceptible of jealousy, and she will abhor the demonstration of your cherished tenderness for the family which wrestled with hers for the throne which she now possesses."

In spite, however, of this expressed desire to withdraw from the public eye, the two

brothers, at any rate according to their own account, appear on one occasion to have found a body of supporters ready to push their claims to the uttermost, for in the letter already quoted there occurs the following somewhat startling passage: "Add to these (although this is unknown to the Government) such language has been held to us, and such direct and dangerous hints given by the late Duke of Gordon, Macleod, Sir Howard Douglas, and other leaders of the Conservative Party, in the height of their despair and indignation at the manoeuvres of William IV, in favour of the Reform Bill, that we, who do know it, and who disregarded their views and made their party our enemies by declining to be made the head of a faction we disapproved, cannot commit the slightest indiscretion which might lay us open to any."

THIS statement can only mean that little more than a century ago the Tory Party seriously proposed to overthrow the existing dynasty and to replace it by an offshoot of the House of Stuart, and it is so extravagant that it is hardly worthy of mention. Of the three men named, Macleod cannot be easily identified, and there was no Conservative leader of that name in 1832; George, fifth and last Duke of Gordon, was one of the twenty-two peers who voted against the Third Reading of the Reform Bill after the Duke of Wellington and his supporters had decided to abstain, so he may well have been an advocate of desperate remedies, though it must be remembered that, at this time, he was sixty-two, and had been made a Privy Councillor only two years before; Sir Howard Douglas was presumably the third Baronet of Carn in Perthshire, and he had a distinguished military career, but until he entered the House of Commons as M.P. for Liverpool in 1842, he appears to have taken no such part in domestic politics as would warrant the supposition that he wished to overthrow the throne of William IV. Who the "other leaders of the Conservative Party" were must be left to conjecture, unless, indeed, the Duke of Wellington and Sir Robert Peel are to be included in the plot. There was much wild talk on both sides in 1832, just as there was at the time of the passage of the Parliament Act in 1911, and minds so impressionable as those of Thomas Allen's two sons may well have believed and magnified the talk of the Tory extremists. In actual fact, however, Britain in 1832, was a great deal nearer to a Republic than to a Stuart restoration.

Thomas Allen married twice, and was the father of nine children, one of whom was alive in 1909, before he died in 1852. Of the two brothers, John Sobieski and Charles Edward, the latter alone left issue, and his grandson, Alfred Edward von Platt, is, if still alive, the head of the Sobieski Stuarts.

THE NIGHT

HO, sentinel! What of the night?
Master, I look at the night, gazing out far away into her. Sometime soon
When the day come I will report to you waves,
Other waves too coming after, to us as we go over the water.
A dolphin passes, a bird, or the spar of a schooner.
But, master, here I see nothing, only the night.

Ho, sentinel! What of the night?
Master, I look at the night, as my eyes have been always accustomed.
Time was, a long time ago, when figures of men were seen passing, some
Floated by and were bloated, some dead, others were comely,
And some were seen live, and stepped across out of the water towards us.
But here, master, now I see nothing, only the night.

Sentinel, sentinel, tell me, what of the night?
Master, sleep, sleep softly I pray you. I look out into the west, now over into
the east,
And there far away, yes, there is a lighting, as of a dream that is bright.
Yes, master, the news is good. They are fingers, I see them, large,
Lifting over the dark horizon, golden, fair-shaped, out of the blackness come,
And they bear him swiftly, bringing you happiness.

J. MENLOVE EDWARDS.

THE CAIRNGORM HILLS OF SCOTLAND

By SETON GORDON

IN the Central Highlands, mid-way between the valleys of the Dee and Spey, the Cairngorm hills form, with the exception of Ben Nevis, the highest mountain range in the British Isles. The old name of the range is Am Monadh Ruadh, which is, interpreted from Gaelic, the old language of the country, into English, the Red Hill Range. The modern name, "Cairngorm" is taken from one of the group, A' Charn Gorm (*Anglice* Cairngorm), the Blue Hill. Cairngorm and its approaches have been much in the news of late, for they are now a National Park and a course of instruction in ski-ing and other winter sports is being held this year in March and April, which are considered the two best months for winter sports at this elevation.

By Alpine standards, the Cairngorms are not high. Their chief, Ben MacDhui, reaches a height of 4,296 feet above the level of the distant sea, and is the second highest hill in Britain, Ben Nevis (4,406 feet) on the west coast of Scotland being the highest. A small hill, one may say, in comparison with the stately Matterhorn, which exceeds 14,000 feet, yet it must be remembered that the base of the Matterhorn is 6,000 feet above sea level, whereas the base of Ben MacDhui is only 1,000 feet above the level of the ocean. There are indeed few Scottish hills which reach a height of 4,000 feet, and of these, four are found on the Cairngorm range. They are Ben MacDhui, Braeriach (4,248 feet), Cairntoul (4,241 feet) and Cairngorm (4,084 feet).

CUTTING through the hill range, between Ben MacDhui and Braeriach, is the celebrated Lairig Ghru, the wildest hill pass in Scotland, across which leads an old right-of-way joining Strathspey with the upper reaches of the Dee valley. Through this pass, in former days, the women of Rothiemurchus on Strathspey used to carry their eggs to sell to the people of Mar on Deeside, the inference being that they were more skilled hen-wives than their friends in the neighbouring valley. In a severe winter the pass is snow-covered from October until May and on the south side of the watershed, at the foot of Ben MacDhui, is a boulder with the name Clach nan Taillear, the Tailors' Stone. It commemorates a tragedy of long ago. Certain tailors wagered that they would dance in three "dells"—the Dell of Abernethy, the Dell of Rothiemurchus and Dell More (Dal Mór) in Mar—in the course of a winter day. They danced at Abernethy; they danced at Rothiemurchus, and then set out to traverse the formidable Lairig Ghru pass. A blizzard overtook them, and they perished in the scant shelter of the stone which commemorates them to this day.

In the Cairngorm Hills is the birthplace of the river Dee which flows past Balmoral and the Moor of Dinnet. At the western entrance to this moor, at Cambus O'May, the weeping birch is seen at its best, and an exquisite perfume from the young birch leaves here permeates the air after rain in early summer. The Dee has its source on the plateau of Braeriach, at a height of 4,000 feet: its source is probably higher than that of any other British river. From the Wells of Dee it meanders across an Alpine plateau, as though a little unsure of its new-found freedom, then drops in a series of white cascades to the depths of the Garbh Choire or Garrachory, a thousand feet below. The Dee at this height

commonly flows through a snow tunnel until after the longest day.

IF indeed there be perpetual snow on any British hill, it is to be found on Braeriach, at the western end of the Garrachory. Beneath the western precipice, and sheltered from the mild south-west winds, a great snowfield is formed by the winter gales, which whirl the powdery snow, after driving it for miles over exposed ground, into this sheltered hollow. The snowfield gradually decreases in size during the summer months, and sometimes is very small by mid-October, when it is reinforced by new snow. I have never seen this corrie without snow, and although in mid-October the snow may be of small extent, and of no great depth, it is by then ice rather than snow, and is hard as the proverbial iron. It has been computed that, were the Cairngorm Hill fifteen hundred feet higher, they would have a snow-cap throughout the year. As it is, a snow storm may drift over them during any month in the summer and I have seen snow-drifts several feet deep formed at the Wells of Dee, covering the young grass and the alpine flowers in the first week of July.

The flora of the high Cairngorms is at its best in June and early July. On gravelly slopes from 2,000 feet to 3,500 feet, the dwarf azalea—*azalea procumbens*—opens its pink, china-like flowers which are, when in bud, of a deep rose colour. A fortnight after its flowering the cushion pink beautifies the plateau, its small red flowers set so close together as to form an almost uninterrupted flower-head which, by its honey scent, attracts the alpine burnett moth, a black moth of daylight which ascends to the high tops. The purple mountain saxifrage is almost unknown on the Cairngorms, for granite soil is distasteful to it, but the starry saxifrage—*saxifraga stellaris*—grows in the spray of most of the hill burns. Nor is there any gentian on the Cairngorms, and this, too, may be due to the granite soil, for the gentians which beautify the Alps are all, I think, partial to limestone formation.

THE limit of tree growth on the Cairngorm range is 2,000 feet. There are a few sturdy Scots firs at this height, standing on wind-swept hill slopes, but there are no saplings beneath them to carry on their race. That the tree area is receding is shown by the name Glen Giusachan. The name Giusachan means "abounding in firs", yet throughout its length the glen is now treeless, although embedded in the peat and exposed from time to time by floods are the stumps, and even the trunks, of firs which have flourished here centuries, perhaps thousands of years, before. Were areas of the existing stock of old fir trees to be fenced in, they would reproduce themselves by natural regeneration: as it is, the seedlings are eaten by the red deer which roam here.

The Cairngorm Hills indeed constitute one vast deer forest (a Highland deer forest may be treeless), but now sheep are pastured on some of the slopes, and cattle feed in some of the glens. Here, as elsewhere, is seen the gradual depopulation of the Highlands—derelict houses where once hardy men and women lived simple lives are seen in the Glens—for there is not a single inhabitant from the Linn of Dee westward to the Bynack. Like the old pines, relics of the Caledonian Forest through which the wild boar, the wolf, and the elk roamed, the people are gradually and steadily leaving the district. At least two Scots firs of the Cairngorms commemorate past history, and I hope may be preserved. One of them, above the Lairig track where it crosses the Luibeg stream two miles west of Derry Lodge in Mar Forest, is named Craobh an Oir, in English the Tree of Gold, and the tradition of the country is that MacKenzie of Dalmore buried beneath it "treasure" which he had taken from a party of Lochaber raiders who were returning home after having raided the lowland districts of Aberdeenshire. By its appearance, this lone tree is one of the

oldest in the forest, but indeed, all the firs on the upper reaches of the Luibeg Burn are old: during the forty-five years I have known them they have scarcely altered in their size or appearance and seem unchanging as the hills themselves.

THE second fir which bears a name is in Glen Eanaich, which as the Celtic scholar Professor Watson informed me, means Glen of the Marsh. The fir is named Craobh Pilleag, the Return Tree.

A curious name, the reader may say, yet it commemorates an old Highland custom long fallen into disuse in the district. In the days when the tree was named the people of Rothiemurchus at the beginning of summer went up to the summer shielings at the head of Loch Eanaich and, a day or two before they themselves made the journey one of their number drove the cattle up the glen. The herdsman accompanied the animals as far as the Tree of the Return. Once he had reached that tree he knew, from past experience, that the cattle of themselves would continue on the track to the shielings, and he returned to Rothiemurchus. Hence the name, Tree of the Return. I should like to see these two trees preserved for future generations of hill lovers. Too late, another celebrated fir, the Gallows Tree, on the roadside west of Braemar, was allowed to die. This old fir was undermined by quarrying in a gravel pit, and fell to the ground. Afterwards it was, like St. Maolruba's Tree on the isle of Loch Maree, placed, now lifeless, again in an upright position, held in position by wires. It was here that the mother of a Lamond of Inverey, when her son was hung for sheep-stealing, cursed the Farquharsons in a historic curse which is said to have been fulfilled. But that is another story, and merits an article to itself.

The Tree of the Return has seen many changes since it grew as a sapling centuries ago. It has seen the last of the ospreys, which at one time nested on the ruined castle on the island of Loch an Eilein, Loch of the Island, disappear from the district. Indeed, Loch an Eilein was one of the last nesting places of the osprey in Scotland, and now that the bird has gone from here, and from Loch Arkaig in Lochaber, no osprey nests in the Highlands. The ruthless persecution of the osprey in the Highlands is well known: the native race was destroyed before we as a nation became conscious of the value of our rarer birds. Unlike the osprey, the golden eagle has survived, and is still seen in the Cairngorm area, where it nests sometimes in a Scots fir. A pair of eagles for a number of years nested in a birch tree, but the tree became well-known, and the eairie was usually robbed. The human wanderer on the high Cairngorm plateaux may at times see the golden eagle sailing thousands of feet above him: from that elevation the King of Birds must, in clear weather, have the whole of Scotland in view, from the North Sea to the Cuillin Hills of Skye towards the west.

PTARMIGAN share the high ground with the eagle. The eagle descends often to the tree zone, but the ptarmigan never. This hardy mountain dweller has its home in the zone between 2,000 feet and 4,000 feet above sea level, and in winter changes his plumage to a whiteness that rivals the snowy acres where he lives. Ptarmigan sometimes sit extremely closely on their eggs. On one occasion I lifted a hen bird from the nest, and held her free in my outstretched hand, yet she did not fly, either then, or when I set her again on the nest. Even more tame is another dweller on the Cairngorms—the dotterel. Unlike the ptarmigan the dotterel is only a summer visitor to these high and exposed hill slopes and plateaux, arriving in May and leaving in August and September. In few species does the hen bird trust her mate, a mere male, with the unassisted duties of hatching the eggs. The dotterel is one of these exceptions to the general rule and the male, so far as is known, incubates the eggs without his mate taking any apparent interest in his, or their, welfare. She is indeed the larger and the more brightly plumaged of the

pair—a lady as it were in masculine attire. The male dotterel is sometimes extraordinarily tame; one had complete trust in me, and actually left his eggs to run across to where I sat beside the nest, and to remove deftly a "daddy-long-legs" fly which had alighted on my coat.

That great naturalist Viscount Grey of Fallodon had shown me photographs of Bengt Berg, the Swedish naturalist, feeding a dotterel on worms, and one day I collected a tinful of worms in the glen below, and took them up to my dotterel. He welcomed me with obvious pleasure, but although he stood beside me he could not be induced to take the smallest interest in the worms. There are unexpected birds on the Cairngorms at times. I recall finding the mummified body of a lapwing near the top of Ben MacDhui, and a robin lying dead at the Pools of Dee, when deep snow covered that upland region in spring. In early summer, especially if the weather be fine and warm, large flocks of black-headed gulls fly up from the Spey valley and search the hills, on foot, for moths and daddy-long-legs. I have mentioned the tameness of the ptarmigan: the Cairngorm Hills are their chief stronghold in Scotland. During the years of the second world war the stock decreased almost to vanishing point, mainly, I think, because of the great increase in the number of foxes. Ptarmigan are now increasing, but the stock, is still below normal. The young ptarmigan is extremely hardy, as it must needs be in these upland regions. I have seen a newly-hatched ptarmigan brood running about in the snow at the end of June, and, recently, when one of a brood of ptarmigan lost confidence while flying over a loch and fell into the icy water, it swam quickly and confidently to the shore, swimming well up in the water as though this had been its natural element. One of the rarest British breeding birds, the snow-bunting, has its home in the Cairngorms, although its rarity makes the discovery of its nest a matter of great difficulty. An interesting paper appeared in the *Field* some years ago under the signature of that eminent naturalist, Desmond Nethersole-Thompson, on the discovery of the snow-bunting's nest on the roof of Scotland. During their search for the bird the writer of that article and his wife pitched their tent in the snows of the high tops, and endured considerable hardship.

MOST of the lochs of the Cairngorms hold trout, and some of them char. The highest loch which holds trout is Loch Etchachan, which is situated on the shoulder of Ben MacDhui at a height of 3,100 feet above the level of the sea. This high loch is usually covered with a sheet of thick ice until late in May, and the trout which inhabit it are thin from a spartan diet. There are many trout in Loch A'an, a sheet of water situated in romantic scenery in a deep hollow between Ben MacDhui and Cairngorm. On the shore of Loch A'an is the celebrated Clach Dhiona, the Shelter Stone. This great boulder, resting upon other stones, forms a recess where, in olden times, hunters of the red deer, and, in more recent years climbers and walkers (among them at least one prime minister) have spent the night. The scene here is as grand as any in the Scottish Highlands, and in the early part of summer the sound of waterfalls, swollen by melting snow, accentuates the silence of the hills. In Loch A'an the river A'an or Avon has its source. Timothy Pont, writing three hundred years ago, describes it as the most clear river in Scotland, and its extreme clearness renders its depth deceptive, as the hillman may find to his peril if he should seek to ford it in flood. There are tales of the Fingalians in the Cairngorms, and the River A'an, according to tradition, received its name from the drowning here of Athfhinn (Aaeen), the Most Fair One, Fingal's wife who, deceived by the clearness of the water, was swept away to her death near Inchrory: her grave is pointed out to this day.

The crystals known as Cairngorm stones take their name from the Cairngorm Hills, where a century and more ago certain hardy

persons spent much of their time in searching for them. The typical Cairngorm stone is a quartz crystal, sherry or wine-coloured. It is found usually in clay, where a vein of white quartz, after running for some distance across the surface of the hillside, disappears below the ground. The climber on the hills from time to time comes across miniature quarries, where in old days men, and women too, dug for Cairngorm stones. There was, a hundred years ago, a celebrated character who received the name Cailleach nan Clach, the Old Woman of the Stones, because she spent her time during the summer months digging for these crystals; some of them she sold for considerable sums. One of the finest Cairngorm stones I found on the hill range was close to the summit of Ben MacDhui; its point, sharpened like a pencil, was just sticking out of the gravel. Hundreds of climbers must have passed near, or actually over, the spot without having noticed this precious stone. It is not only on the Cairngorm range that Cairngorm stones are found, and it is to be feared that crystals are sold under that name which have been discovered and cut as far away as South America.

WHAT is the future of the Cairngorm Hills? The days of deer-stalking are, it seems nearing their end. The expense of maintaining a forest, its stalking paths, its stalkers, is immeasurably greater than formerly. The great Forest of Mar, which formerly had seven stalkers has now only one. I have said that the north side of Cairngorm is now a national park, and I should not be surprised if, at some future date, the whole area is absorbed into a larger park. Should this be decided on, care must be taken adequately to preserve the bird and animal life of the area, especially the bird life. The golden eagle must be strictly protected during the nesting season, and watchers must keep the nesting areas of dotterel and snow-bunting under observation. The Cairngorm Hills and their approaches form one of the most beautiful areas in the British Isles, and the climate is drier and more bracing than that of the Western Highlands. That expanse of country gives pleasure to the lover of the wild and lonely places throughout the year, and care must be exercised, that it may retain its charm for future generations.

SILENCE

Ghost-pilot of the orbs that sail the sky,
Silence, that rules the comet's fiery wings,
Set gem-like at the secret core of things;
Silence that shrouded Hamlet's passing sigh,
That broods upon the icy mountains high,
That queens it by the moonlit faery rings
And hearkens as the lonely night-bird sings;
Silence that seals the tomb when mortals die:

Will that mute spirit one day loosen tongue,
Give voice as in a thund'rous hymn of praise
And joy in golden speech through endless days,
A pæan, trumpet-like, so long unsung,
Vibrating down the broad and winding ways
Of vasty space, the Heavenly Host among?

MAURICE BURKE.

Short Story

NEIGHBOUR'S HELP

By R. K. NARAYAN

The talkative man said:

YEARS ago I had a friend called Ekambaram. Our families had been neighbours for over a generation and we were playmates as little urchins. All through the day we would play marbles in the street, and when dusk fell we would squat on the steps of his house and talk far into the evening till we were dragged in by our elders. We were put to school on the same day. I clearly remember with what excitement we went to the class on the first day and how thoroughly we loathed it on the second . . . Our progress was more or less alike till we came to the School Final, where I failed. He passed on to the College and we lost touch with each other till I caught up with him in the B.A., where he was held up. And so we attended the Convocation together.

We married and settled down more or less at the same time. I inherited my father's wholesale business. My friend studied law and hung up a board. And now his prosperity didn't keep pace with the growth of his family. Almost every other year there was an addition to his family, but at the bar he remained very much a fresher. In course of time he had only his house left of all his ancestral property. My position was different. I had inherited a successful business as I told you, and I had little to do but keep it going: and I have always believed in sending a little money to the bank after paying all the bills of the month. Ekambaram often explained to me his troubles and borrowed money.

One evening when I returned home from the club I found a great stirring and sensation in the next house. My friend had had a sudden heart attack and the doctors wouldn't give him even half a dozen hours. I shudder to recollect the scene. I sat up with him till midnight. Before he passed away he requested me to help his family. He handed me some papers and whispered, " My mother's jewels . . ."

"What about them?"

"Coming up for auction, interest due . . ."

"I see . . ."

"Notice given. Stop the sale and redeem them. Keep them till my boy can redeem them from you."

The next day I gave Ekambaram's son a hundred rupees for funeral expenses. The subsequent rites were conducted under my personal supervision. I opened an account in the stores for them and told the boy that he could buy provisions for a hundred rupees a month. I told them that they might ask me for anything they wanted. I offered to see all the boys through their education. When a man gets into this mood there is really no limit to his goodness. In course of time I quietly redeemed the jewels and kept them in my safe.

On the first of every month the stores sent me a bill, and I paid half a dozen other bills on behalf of Ekambaram's family. And his son frequently came to me with extra demands. When I saw how very awkward he felt on such occasions I told him, "Don't you worry about it. I am putting down into my books every rupee I am giving you. I know when to ask you to return me the money."

It was true. After the first flush of generosity I became more critical of my own attitude, and though I never stinted the amount I was giving, I opened a ledger in which I entered the most elaborate account of my gifts. After all, I was a business man and my professional instinct gradually asserted itself. Day by day as I pored over the accounts I began to despise myself for the interest I was losing on these advances. I charged a reasonable rate of in-

terest on the sums I was advancing. Would you call nine per cent per annum unreasonable?

A year and a half passed. I was in the throes of half-yearly auditing. The books revealed a messy state of affairs. Looking over the columns I was disposed to put the blame on my neighbour. The matter needed a closer scrutiny. I bundled up a dozen ledgers and files, put them into a *utka*, and started for my garden house soon after dinner one night. The garden was three miles out from the town, and it was my favourite refuge when I had heavy work to do and wanted to be alone. My garden house consisted of a couple of rooms and a veranda. I had thrown in a chair, a table, a rough bed, and a rusty lamp.

It was nearly nine when the *utka* struggled up the rough track I had laid out from the main road, which passed under dwarf coconuts and waving plantain leaves. I struck a match and lit the old lamp. The *utka* man carried in the ledgers, put them on the table, and went away. By the time the *utka* sound had died in the distance I was half lost in work. This was a very serious matter for me every half year—checking my debits and credits and generally surveying my financial standing. As far as my business accounts were concerned, matters were very satisfactory. It was only my personal accounts that caused me worry. I knew where the shoe pinched. Everything would have been well but for the ledger marked "Ekambaram." I opened its leaves with distaste. I wasn't going to let silly sentimentality upset my finances. If I died a bankrupt it would be hard to find a fool like me to take up the burden of a family. I was going to examine the accounts in detail, add up the interest, get Ekambaram's boy to execute a bond, give him six months, and get the house made over to me. Of course, I wouldn't dream of turning them out—immediately. I would wait till the boy could support his family. . . .

I had the ledger open before me. I was absorbed in a most complicated game of addition and multiplication. I already visualized myself as an owner of the neighbour's house. The time was about twelve, I suddenly felt as if a crow or a bat had flown across my face. The next moment the lamp made a noise, burned brightly, and went out. I looked out. It was pitch dark and not a leaf stirred. The coconut leaves spread against the starlit sky and stood very still. Far away in the distance a dog barked. From the depths of the wood an owl hooted. I lit the lamp again, picked up my pen, dipped it in ink, and held it over the open page. All at once I felt a slight cramping in my thumb and I presently saw my pen crossing out the page.

"What am I doing?" I asked myself.

My hand wrote, "Wouldn't you like these pages to remain very clean?"

"Of course I would," I replied.

"So that you may turn out of my home my wife and children more easily?"

I was baffled. I had a feeling that someone was speaking to me. I looked over my shoulder. I was startled to see a shadow, my own, sprawling all over the wall behind me. On the ceiling I saw a gigantic shadow of my hand with the pen sticking out like a huge rod. As I sat staring I saw this huge shadow move to the ink-pot, dip into it, and creep back to the ledger: it was bobbing up and down. I watched it in terror for a moment. I turned, my eyes fell on the page before me. On it was written: "Let me warn you. . . ."

I said, "I won't hold this pen any longer," and promptly appeared the reply: "In that case I will have to find some other means of communication. . . ."

"Who are you, anyway?"

"I thought you would have known by now."

"Ekambaram!" I cried.

"Good fellow!" my hand wrote. "You never forget a friend."

"Ekambaram, where are you?"

"Here, standing right on your toe almost. . . ."

I looked down at my feet and bent the toes to see if I had control over them. "I don't see you," I said.

"Hardly my fault," wrote my hand. "Would you like to see me now?"

"Yes."

"Put out the light."

"I won't," I cried, and dropped the pen. I looked at the page. The entries I had laboriously made were all crossed out. I—looked at my hand in anger, turned it about as if it were a novelty I was seeing for the first time. I swore at it and at the so-called Ekambaram. Hardly had I finished abusing when my hand came up, pinched my cheek, and patted it patronizingly. I held it away with my other hand.

"Whoever and whatever you are, why do you trouble me?" I screamed. No answer came from that deep still night. I rose and walked into the dark garden. There I stood gazing foolishly about. In a quarter of an hour I felt I had regained my senses. I returned to my table and as a piece of defiance, decided to continue my work. I picked up the pen, dipped the point in ink, and held it over the ledger. My hand wrote, "So glad you are back, I have still so much to say."

"What is it?" I asked.

"Tell me exactly, how much have you spent on my family?"

"Give me a moment." I said. I hastily glanced at the bottom of the page and said: "Six thousand . . ."

"So I see, but isn't it a highly imaginary account with interest and all?"

"But I have charged only a low rate," I said indignantly.

"We will decide it later. Let us settle the principal first."

"Here are the entries; you can see them for yourself . . ." I said. My hand went over the items one by one, paused, put a tick-mark or a cross-out, and passed on. I bore this kind of thing for an hour or more, but the strain was too much; my head all of a sudden sank on the table.

The noise of birds woke me up in the morning. I lifted my head. All my joints were aching. The lamp was still burning, very feeble and pale in the shaft of sunlight streaming into the room. The pen lay across my fingers lifelessly. I felt relieved to think I was waking from a bad dream. But a look at the ledger on the table shook my nerves. The marks against the entries were there and the total was crossed out. At the bottom of the page was written, "Be a good boy and don't trouble my poor family. We owe you in all just a little over four thousand. Sell my mother's jewels and take your money, and hand the balance over to my son. After that you may leave them alone. If you get proper value for the jewels you should be able to give him at least two thousand. Goodbye and God bless you for your great kindness to us. . . ."

A month later I sent for Ekambaram's son and gave him two thousand rupees. I told him, "You must manage with this till you are able to earn a living. I am afraid I can't devote any more attention to your affairs."

I never ventured near that garden house again. When someone offered to buy it a few months later I accepted the price without a second thought, though it meant a loss of about fifteen hundred to me.

ART

By SYDNEY J. MAIDEN

MR. EPSTEIN'S PROGRESS

MR. JACOB EPSTEIN has achieved the uncomfortable distinction of becoming an institution. Time was when an exhibition of his works would burst upon a delighted or infuriated public with high explosive force. This phenomenon was not wholly devoid of advantage to the artist and certain interested parties. That this latest exhibition at the Leicester Galleries has had no such effect either way might be due to the fact that he has ceased to astonish friends or foes and is no longer to be regarded as the *enfant terrible* of sculpture. On the other hand it is possible that he has little more to tell us than he had twenty or so years ago.

In an uncomfortably small room at the Leicester Galleries the fare he serves conforms to a pattern with which we have long been familiar. Again there is the massive carved *pièce de resistance*, biblical in inspiration, supported by a selection of bronzes. Formerly the carved piece was a provocative work which seldom failed to stimulate lively controversy. This time the bulky Hopton wood stone "Lazarus" seems to have missed fire. The deliberate uncouthness, which some mistake for strength, is present but it is doubtful if either Mr. Epstein's most ardent admirers or his most resolute opponents have been unduly warmed by it. The figure, bound with formalized grave bands, with the head not unnaturally askew, evokes little emotion save regret that the sculptor should have laboured to such small purpose. It is, in fact, stone-dead both as a design and as a conception, and that is something very unusual in a work by Mr. Epstein.

THESE strictures would, I feel, need little modification if the carving were displayed in a large gallery to be viewed at a distance commensurate with its scale. An eminent newspaper critic has, *à propos* this exhibition, been lamenting our neglect of this great sculptor as an obvious decorator of the exteriors of our public buildings. Nothing in "Lazarus" supports this lament. Moreover, Mr. Epstein's previous work in this field raises a doubt if we are indeed so neglectful. The figures which clung so precariously to the façade of the former Medical Association building in the Strand failed to do much more than exasperate the unco guid. "Night and Morning" on the Underground Headquarters in Westminster are alien and inappropriate to the character and quality of the building.

The bronzes in this exhibition maintain the sculptor's high standard. They are vigorous, animated and highly impressive where the model possessed these attributes but somewhat superficial where they did not. Although Mr. Epstein has little new to tell us of his reactions to the human head than when he produced such bronzes as the magnificent character study "Cunningham Grahame" or the powerful "Paul Robeson" many years ago, he remains without peer as a portraitist in bronze. It is not suggested that he is satisfied with this position but it would be healthy if a "pacemaker" could arise to give him a run for his money. Mr. Epstein has always suffered from two opposing types of critic; the one on bended knees, the other astride a high horse. Neither position is conducive to a proper appreciation of his or of any artist's work.

PARIS-LONDRES

MESSRS. TOOTH have shown ingenuity and taste in the small but select collection (twenty-nine items) displayed in their Galleries in Bruton Street, London.

These pictures, they tell us, were recently purchased in France. With the exception of two Sickerts, painted in 1902, during his sojourn in Dieppe and under the powerful influence of contemporary French painting, all the exhibits are by French or near French painters. They include a characteristic middle-period Corot, a touching portrait sketch of his son (c. 1882) by Renoir, a delicately misty Monet, *Environs d'Argenteuil la brume* (c. 1873), and a Vuillard, *La Causette* (c. 1892), which last proves once more how strongly this painter continues to influence work on both sides of the Channel to-day.

But I would reserve my highest praise for Boudin, three wholly satisfying examples of whose subtle talent are here. The little panel, *Trouville* 1872 is, I consider, the pick of them. This is impressionism at its best. The subject is one in which Boudin often found delight and inspiration. A group of leisured ladies is shown seated on the sea-front of the French watering-place as it was nearly eighty years ago. A delicious moment of a distant summer day is captured with swift, confident and economical brush strokes. The air is vibrant with the glitter from a sunlit sea, the figures in their softly coloured costumes—their parasols aloft in the light breeze—seem alive with trivial gossip. And all this on a panel only six by twelve inches. I could hope that the enterprising directorate of the Tate Gallery will some day give this great little master a one-man showing at Millbank. I for one would be early in the queue.

THE PRIVATE COLLECTOR

THE Tate Gallery did well to devote ample space to this exhibition of pictures and sculpture selected from the private collections of members of the Contemporary Art Society. Here are many masterpieces which in the ordinary course are visible only to a favoured few. It is to be hoped that this exhibition will stimulate the membership of a Society which has done much to "bring home" the work of native and foreign artists.

SING of the light on the water
At night; and the swans, and the sound of a mill,
And the cold rain falling.

Sing of smooth stones on a hill,
Of wind in the eyes, and, below in the valley,
Invisible partridges calling.

Sing again of the castles in Spain
That we span with four hands in the loom of the rain,
Of dreams in the room in the inn.

Remember the death in December,
The clamour of fear at the turn of the year,
And the silent shape of Spring.

Sing of the tidal shore of time,
Where we found a face like a perfect rhyme
To a word we had heard before.

MARY WYKEHAM.

LITERATURE AND CRITICISM

Edited by CHRISTOPHER SYKES

PERSPECTIVES IN HISTORY

IN one respect the 20th century can be admired for having wrought beautiful work: in its middle years it has learned anew the art of writing contemporary history. It is early to say why this should have happened. If, for example, it is urged that the great mass of history which has been thrust upon it must have produced valuable historical writing by the sheer force of weight, then it can easily be pointed out that the Napoleonic age was also heavily pressed in this way, but produced extremely bad historical writing on the subject of itself—sentimental misrepresentation in France, and sentimental self-righteousness in England, and plentiful lies all round—for many years. A paradoxical but more likely explanation is to be found in modern propaganda, and the consequent enormous spread of bogus history. A year after the German victories of 1940 the power of German "psychological warfare" began to show an astonishing decline, comparable to that of Communist propaganda in the last ten years, or to the influence of daily newpapers which is considerably smaller to-day than it was, say in 1900, when the malign modern technique of indoctrination was less thoroughly understood. Daily stunts, daily over-simplifications, and daily appeals to shallow emotions weary the spirit and prompt men towards the refreshment of the truth. Perhaps sinister little Goebbels and his ridiculous lieutenant Rosenberg, as also our own great Press lords may yet be acknowledged as persons of lasting consequence in the conduct of modern historical research. Odder things have happened.

Two admirable histories have recently been published by Victor Gollancz, both concerning Europe, both written by Americans.* They are widely different, Mr. Stringfellow Barr's *Pilgrimage of Western Man* being a work in which emotion and impulse are prominent, while Mr. Hans Kohn's *The Twentieth Century* is a dispassionate work of reference; yet they have things in common, notably a generous optimism and a determination to avoid vulgar prejudice. Both books refuse the idea which an era of war makes tempting that the world is divided into two halves, a good and a bad, or was ever in so unlikely a posture; both look forward with confidence to a serene, not too distant future where mankind will be able to escape the horrors of violent conflict. Both are to a certain extent works of joyful hope, and both are exciting to read.

Mr. Hans Kohn, who is known to many readers as the author of *The Idea of Nationalism* is a contributor to *The Encyclopedia Britannica* and something of the stoic quality of that great work informs this collection of his essays which, as a dictionary of 20th century political activity and predicament, is likely to be invaluable to scholars for many years to come, notably in what he has to say on "The Permanent Mission" of Russia, on Racialism, Fascism, and National Socialism. If these essays had as much defined point of view as they have of conventional detachment they might give the final word on their subjects. We will return to this question later. Meantime it can be said that any seeker after the truth is likely to find the facts he needs in this precise and valuable record. In Mr. Barr he may find many of them, too, and as well

* *The Pilgrimage of Western Man.* By Stringfellow Barr. *Victor Gollancz.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

The Twentieth Century. By Hans Kohn. *Victor Gollancz.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

certain, of the more magnificent emotions with which they are connected today.

His book, *The Pilgrimage of Western Man*, is a concise history of Europe, supposedly from 1500 to 1949, though in fact, the author devotes much of his space to earlier times and refers to them throughout. His thesis is not unlike that to be found in the *Outline of History* of H. G. Wells. He is pleading for reintegration. To put it roughly, he maintains that the unity of the Christian West, a visible reality in the time of St. Thomas of Aquin, and destroyed at the time of the Renaissance, is the ideal to which all men of good will have been striving since the catastrophe, and whose recovery can only now be achieved by the establishment of World Government.

Because Mr. Barr is an enemy of vulgar prejudice he takes much care to avoid those fallacies into which Wells tumbled when exploring this path, and by which he did lasting harm. The bias in ordinary "thoughtfulness" of today, the Leftist feeling against clergy, big business, and upper classes, most of which is totally irrelevant to modern problems, persists, so far as the English-speaking world is concerned, largely because, by the brilliance of his writing, Wells made these prejudices seem new, valid, and exciting, long after their time. He was a man with a very human and mischievous weakness: he was so easily impressed by his own tastes that he confused them with the needs of the world, so that, to take an example, because the Mongols rejected the Pope's overtures with scorn (just as Wells would have done), he gave the readers of his popular history a kindly and hopelessly misleading view of those arch-destroyers. No such weakness, or acquiescence in such weakness as inherited by readers of the Outline, influences Mr. Barr's work; on the contrary, he goes out of his way to see divers ages from divers angles even when this means looking through the eyes of really discredited men. He very rightly watches the late 16th century, not from the heroic place of Shakespeare's contemporaries or the Dutch insurgents, but from the throne of Philip II, and the late 17th century from under the stupendous false hair of the Grand Monarch, to whom indeed he is so anxious not to be unjust that he tends to make us forget that the man was a monster in half of his life. Fairness and common sense are the shining virtues of this history.

Prejudice of the higher sort is there, nevertheless. We may give an example which is of much importance to the work as a whole. He relies on a very widely accepted assumption which, though not disproved, may be responsible for much historical misinterpretation. It runs somewhat as follows: what is called "the waning of the Middle Ages" is supposed to have coincided with a decay of religious faith which thereafter, for good or bad, became a perennial factor of our development. The idea fits many of the facts, but it was never very clearly expressed before the 19th century, when it was easily referred to an undeniable contemporary state of things. There is a possibility that the idea arose from the almost unavoidable habit of seeing one age in terms of another. The truth is probably far more complex than the idea can allow. We should remember that faith is always decaying, and that from the Renaissance onwards this decay became possessed of hitherto forbidden expression. If a sudden accelerated and unprecedentedly general decay did really occur in the early 16th century it is difficult to see what the Reformation, the Counter-Reformation, the Inquisition, Puritanism, the debate on Intolerance, or the Thirty Years War were about. On the other hand, if the assumption is not warranted, as regards the Renaissance, then it is very doubtful whether any such all-conditioning decline took place before the Industrial Revolution. For example, pre-Evangelical England is thought of as excessively profane, yet the piety of Johnson was not eccentric, and eighteenth-century libraries were chiefly filled with volumes of sermons. The France of Louis XV with its amorous Bishops and

profligate abbés is a byword for religious degeneration, yet it was those same abbés in exile who began the English Catholic revival, not by intrigue (which would have defeated its own end in this Protestant country), but by the example of dutiful and selfless lives. It is convenient to think of the European break-up occurring at the same time, and as a result of a decline of trust in God, but this convenience is not documented. Mr. Barr, while accepting the assumption, gives very little weight to the absence of any great exterior non-Christian challenge to Europe during three hundred years, which, in Professor Toynbee's opinion, was the deadly intoxicant.

This pessimistic prejudice, (for if faith was really lost in 1500, what hope have we of making good so long a deprivation?), is counterbalanced in Mr. Barr's history by an optimistic one, namely a conviction that men can and will federate throughout the world because of the pressure of need. Unfortunately the past gives little warrant for such a hope; on the contrary, the recurring predicament of mankind is best expressed in those pleasing lines attributed (perhaps wrongly) to the aged Dean Swift:

> O here's a piece of Irish sense,
> Here Irish wit is seen;
> When all is lost that's worth defence
> They build a magazine.

The last part of the book is the least good. Mr. Barr tends to petulance over the world's failure to combine. He simplifies the problem by comparing the task of World Federation to the uniting of the North American States, and he ignores the recent warnings of history that nothing would be more certain to precipitate disaster than premature union. The admirable League of Nations bore a large responsibility for the Second World War because it encouraged so strong a hope that we had left the brutal age of power politics that English members of Parliament could vote against conscription, in the same summer as they were compelled to go to war, and for a fatally prolonged period uneducated people were allowed to believe that they were defended by something more powerful than armies called "collective security". Under the influence of League idealism the mark of the enlightened man between the wars was to adopt the pacifist creed in the insane belief that pacifist behaviour could create peace of itself. Such an aberration was typical of a great superstition of our time which, because it is not challenged here, prevents both the very remarkable American histories under review from being of the first rank; namely the belief in the inevitability of an ascending scale of ethical and material standards, usually designated under the woolly term "Progress". It is to be doubted whether either of the American authors would accept the hard words of Herbert Butterfield, Regius Professor of Modern History in Cambridge University, when he says: "It is essential not to have faith in human nature. Such faith is a recent heresy and a very disastrous one."

To write history wholly detached from its issues is an impossible task. The result is perplexing and unintelligent and the attempt is going out of fashion. A generous prejudice is far more valuable than the absence of any point of view. But the ideal is a constant capacity to take a philosophic measure, and there has just been reprinted a book* which exemplifies how this exacting need can be satisfied. It is no exaggeration to say that Professor Butterfield's seven lectures, originally given to the Divinity faculty of Cambridge in 1948, (later broadcast in the Third Programme), are among the most important utterances of our time. His subject is the whole of history, his thesis that it is intelligible in terms of Christian theology and in no others, and as he touches on no part of his theme without fearlessly exploring its deepest and most difficult or unwelcome implications, his matter is so packed with

* *Christianity and History.* By Herbert Butterfield. *G. Bell and Sons. 7s. 6d.*

essentials that the book cannot be considered in necessary detail, except at great length. We can here indicate some of its quality, and the very attractive English style in which it is written, by quoting a passage in which he undoes that very idea of inevitable progress which, as we have just noticed, somewhat mars the work of two brilliant Americans:

"History is not like a train, the sole purpose of which is to get to its destination; nor like the conception that my youngest son has of it when he counts 360 days to his next birthday and reckons them all a weariness and meaningless interim, only to be suffered for the sake of what they are leading up to. If we want an analogy with history we must think of something like a Beethoven symphony—the point of it is not saved up until the end, the whole of it is not a mere preparation for a beauty that is only to be achieved in the last bar. And though in a sense the end may lie in the architecture of the whole, still in another sense each moment of it is its own self-justification, each note in its particular context as valuable as any other note, each stage of the development having its immediate significance, apart from the mere fact of any development that does take place. It may be the case that the people who once imagined that the world was soon to come to an end were in a position to discover some fundamental aspects of it, and see them in better proportion, than the 19th century, with its picture of indefinite progress and rising good fortune. We envisage our history in the proper light, therefore, if we say that each generation—indeed each individual—exists for the glory of God; but one of the most dangerous things in life is to subordinate human personality to production, to the State, even to civilization itself, to anything but the glory of God."

CHRISTOPHER SYKES.

DOSTOEVSKY

THE MAKING OF A NOVELIST. By Ernest J. Simmons. *John Lehmann.* 18*s.*

TO describe a book as "important" is to provoke the question "Important to whom?" To the student of Dostoevsky's works this exhaustive study might well be considered indispensable, which is quite as it should be, Mr. Simmons being Professor of Russian Literature at Columbia University. Students unimproved by the Professor's researches should merit no more than a pass degree. The general reader, however, may find Professor Simmons' meticulous analysis of Dostoevsky's profound analysis of the mental workings of his characters exacting rather than stimulating reading. Constitutional inability to skip or to leave unfinished a book once opened, allied to a conscientious resolve to criticize only when fully conversant with the author's text, kept me to a task which, though never boring, sometimes threatened to become so.

This threat is due to the author's method rather than to his manner of writing, which is lucid, unpretentious and often humorous; or perhaps there is a contradiction in his subtitle "The Making of a Novelist" and his intention to furnish biographical material "only when it seems to contribute to this general purpose" of studying the novels themselves. Our modern tendency to identify a writer and his work, allied to Professor Simmons' frequent references to Dostoevsky's psychological tendencies, leads to a thirst for information that would bring Dostoevsky to life, and the final impression is that Professor Simmons has written neither biography nor pure criticism, but has added to exhaustive criticism designed for a university course just so much biography as would give the book popularity such as that achieved by his life of Tolstoy. All credit, nevertheless, is due to him for avoiding the pitfall, into which Dr. Joad so catastrophically fell with his book on Shaw, of writing of a creative artist as if he

were primarily philosopher, prophet or what not.

Differing from most writers on Dostoevsky, who see a division between his early work and that following his exile in Siberia, Professor Simmons traces one line of development from his first, extravagantly successful, work, "Poor Folk", to his last. The duality of Dostoevsky's own nature is reflected in the character of Devushkin, the first of the long series of "Doubles" that were to be the main theme of all his characterization, and already he had indicated, though inevitably not developed, "this concentration on the feelings and emotions, on the internal world of men and women", that was to set him apart from other novelists. Dostoevsky's first literary period, which ended when, at the age of twenty-eight, he was sentenced to imprisonment in Siberia for revolutionary activities, enables Professor Simmons to identify three main types, who appear unfailingly in all the subsequent works, and which he defines as "The Double", "The Meek" and "The Self-Willed" or criminal. "The intense inner analysis of the feelings of these characters belies the experiences of a young man who had as yet seen little of life. For the stuff of these creations he plumbed the depths of his own emotional, spiritual, and psychological self. His own agonies of spirit and mind were transferred into the creatures of his imagination."

On his release from Siberia and military service, Dostoevsky founded with his brother the magazine "Time", in which he serialized the first work he achieved after his imprisonment, "The House of the Dead", a fictionalized account of his Siberian experiences. His ten years of enforced silence had ripened his genius, and in "The House of the Dead" were manifest the future trends of his development. Imprisonment had furnished him with ample models for the "Self-Willed" type, which fascinated him; had stimulated his belief in the goodness of the Russian masses; had set him on his unending and unsatisfied search for God; and had increased the morbidity of his doctrine of salvation through suffering. The masochism that conditioned his courtship of his first wife was reflected in his next work "The Insulted and Injured", wherein for the first time he displayed knowledge of women.

Professor Simmons' exposition of the genesis, often in newspaper reports of criminal proceedings, and development through reverie of the novels is masterly, particularly in the account of "Crime and Punishment". The notes, constantly growing and altering, for "The Idiot", suggest Dostoevsky's method of work, but already, so firm a hold has Professor Simmons taken on our belief, we have become aware that ultimately the novelist's unconscious mind will take charge of his conscious thought and we shall arrive once more, infallibly, at "The Double", "The Meek" and "The Self-Willed". In essential characteristics both men and women will conform to the inevitable pattern, differentiated in the various novels by their names rather than their appearances, and by the differing weights they will attach to their creator's dominant notions of "The Russian Soul", "The Russian Earth", "The Russian God", "Russian Brotherly Love", and the Russian "need of suffering, habitual and unquenchable". Readers of this balanced study will, after allowing themselves a breather, return more appreciatively to the great novels that occasioned it.

BASIL HARVEY.

POETE LAUREATE

SKELTON: THE LIFE AND TIMES OF AN EARLY TUDOR POET. By H. L. R. Edwards. *Jonathan Cape.* 18*s. net.*

AMONG Englishmen of letters, of any period, none is more bizarre than the poet John Skelton (1460?-1529). Here truly is a personage altogether enigmatic and

contradictory: a scholar of various erudition and universal celebrity, a tutor of prince and peer, a rector of the Catholic Church, and at the same time behold him a reckless and ribald satirist, savage, humorous, scurrilous, always undaunted; a figure curious and masterful, and not infrequently inspired.

This work is avowedly a study of Skelton's *Life and Times*, and readers will find that the second of these objectives predominates, which is not surprising: the material available for a life of Skelton is still meagre, despite the efforts of even so tireless an investigator as Mr. Edwards, whereas the ramifications of political and church history, related (some remotely) to Skelton, is large as curiosity can desire or diligence accumulate. Moreover, the author has delved deeply into hitherto unexamined documents concerning the great houses with which Skelton was in any way associated; and not without reward, as where he has been able to identify the lady who inspired that famous poem, *The Buke of Philip Sparrow*, with Miss Jane Scrope, a scion of the house of Bolton.

We would not wish to remove any part of Mr. Edwards' copious erudition from his pages; though many accessories, that savour of historical romance rather than biography, might be spared, and their place devoted to a more comprehensive and acute analysis of Skelton's poetry, which is, after all, his single (and singular) passport to posthumous renown. Much remains to say of his peculiar methods and of the vogue he enjoyed at a period of notorious poetic decadence. Still more important are his relations to the poets who preceded and succeeded him; for it is only by looking before and after, by comparing him with the French school of Chaucer earlier, and with the Italian school of Wyatt and Lord Surrey later, that we discover the depths of Skelton's metrical deficiency whenever he attempted, as he often did, the dignified measures of heroic poetry. Comparison with his contemporary, Dunbar, could also profitably be made, though greatly in the Scottish poet's favour.

Only in that vein of wild and rapid verse, which will bear forever the name *Skeltonic*, only in those tumbling verses of syllables few and rhymes many, loose, prolix and imponderable, does Skelton come truly to life—and it is a life vibrant with wit and daring. In these effusions the poet is a person of importance: though dressed in doggerel, his poems are powerfully conceived, his allegories subtly imagined and at times richly metaphoric. How courageous was this haughty spirit who lashed the clergy of whom he was one, who scourged the mighty Wolsey at the height of his power in rhymes that jingled in every man's ear:

> "Why come ye not to courte?
> To which court?
> To the Kinges court
> Or to Hampton court?
> Nay to the Kinges court:
> The Kinges court
> Should have the excellence,
> But Hampton court
> Hath the preeminence!"*

Such lines by his old tutor must have worked Henry VIII into a fury against the Cardinal.

Mr. Edwards has studied that strange allegoric poem *Speak Parrot* closely, and his contention that "Parrot is neither Skelton nor the Soul" (as has been variously surmised), but rather the voice of poetic Inspiration, is well argued.

Poeta laureatus of the Universities both of Oxford and Cambridge, and *orator regius*, extolled by Erasmus himself, Skelton merited a study which will draw attention to his formidable personality, and (we hope) take its readers to the poet's works.

CHARLES RICHARD CAMMELL.

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* See *Pithy Pleasaunt and Profitable Workes of Maister Skelton, Poete Laureate to King Henry the VIIIth*: London, 1736 p. 153.

Novels

CLOUDS IN THE WIND. F. L. Green. *Michael Joseph.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

MASCARADE. Gabriel Chevallier. *Secker and Warburg.* 9*s.* 6*d.*

PRINCE ISIDORE. Harold Acton. *Methuen.* 10*s.* 6*d.*

THE MAN WHO CARVED WOMEN FROM WOOD. Max White. *Hamish Hamilton.* 9*s.*

THE MAN IN THE TUNNEL. Theodora Benson. *Gollancz.* 10*s.* 6*d.*

THE separate merits of F. L. Green as a novelist are many. His inventiveness can devise a plot and describe its setting and people in such exhaustive detail that they can be seen and almost felt, not imaginatively but sensorily. This Victorian solidity of method applied to a section of society which is always, in some way or another "on the run" is sometimes extremely effective, at least as far as the general atmosphere of his books is concerned. Yet it is also sometimes incongruous, as though among the figures in a painting by Frith you suddenly came across one drawn in by Toulouse Lautrec. He excels in conveying physical atmosphere, the rain falling on dark city streets, the unbroken heat of a sunless summer day, the brooding excitement of imminent disaster, fire, bombardment, or, just simply, arrest. With the impulses and behaviour of his people he is much less at home, he has flashes of quite disconcerting intuition about human conduct among a good deal of platitude and his misfits, eccentrics and grotesques are not sufficiently whole to be convincing, they are too often puppets in the service of some dim allegory in the author's brain.

CLOUDS IN THE WIND has a very good beginning. A man named Frank Chester, whose curious origins and background are, as ever, described in great detail, is very much in love with Harriet, his wife. A woman friend, vital and demanding, insinuates herself into their household, first dominating and alienating the wife and afterwards attempting to seduce the husband. This situation is extremely well done. It then blazes into melodrama; the disturbing female is drowned while swimming, there is some suspicion that the husband pushed her under the water. Husband and wife become further estranged and Frank joins the army and overstays his leave trying to see Harriet and come to an understanding with her. He fails and finds himself willy-nilly a deserter. Then he gets mixed up with a gang of alleged Civil Defence workers which includes both Nazi spies and British agents in a very complicated set-up with murders, hide-outs and escapes. If the book is to be read as a thriller, this part is very well done but Frank's personality is quite lost in it and a human problem of some interest is dispelled. Later the book seems to develop into an inquiry into the opportunities which a confused and bankrupt society offers to people like Charlie, the leader of the gang, with a false social conscience and an unlimited will to power. Once again, the writer's separate excellencies have failed to add up and a promising novel dissolves into a fantastic melodrama lit with passages of insight which gleam momentarily like lighthouse beacons in a fog.

HOW different from the brooding ambitious talent of Mr. F. L. Green and the uneasy world he describes is the firmly grounded story-teller's gift of Gabriel Chevallier, who now seems to be growing out of his *grivoiseries* and his coat-trailing anticlericalism. *Mascarade* contains four novelettes on very different themes and two at least of these seem to me quite admirable. One is *The Parrot*, the study of a murderer told with ironic realism, producing as complete a combination of the prosaic and the sinister as Simenon at his best, plus a humour

which is the author's own. The other is *The Treasure*, a very moving study of an old man reviewing his life as he digs for a sum of money which he hid long ago and with which he now wishes to surprise and delight his grandchildren. The close family feeling of the French, their ability to indulge but also to regulate the passions, their acceptance of the less-pleasing traits of human nature and their reverence for security and permanence, have seldom been better expressed in the framework of a *conte*. *One Way Street* is the portrait of the rank and file collaborator, the average man who can't resist the advantages of riding on the German bandwagon and *Aunt Zoe* is one of his malicious studies of provincial family life. Content apart, the readability of all four stories is superb, they may move or jar but they never weary.

READABILITY, a quality which highbrows sometimes undervalue, is also one of the merits of *Prince Isidore*, a diverting fictional biography of an unfortunate Neapolitan nobleman who, though of benevolent disposition, was the possessor of an Evil Eye of intense power. Misfortunes, trivial and overwhelming, fell upon all those associated with him and the chronicle is told by Mr. Harold Acton with the right note of urbane acceptance. The deplorable but always fascinating background of Bourbon Naples is admirably reproduced both by the writer and by Mr. Feliks Topolski, whose bewhiskered cavalrymen, luscious odalisques and Empire interiors are most seductive. A delightful book, to be read when one hopes that life is not as serious as it seems.

THERE is a certain relation between nineteenth-century Naples and twentieth-century New Orleans as seen by Mr. Max White. Both are vulgar but one had style. The eccentric personages who come to stay at Ginevra Howard's boarding house are good fun while they are being assembled, but after that the author does not seem to know what to do with them, and the heavy hand of the psycho-analyst hovers a bit. I got awfully tired of the young woman whose famous frontal development was plugged as relentlessly as Miss Jane Russell's; in fact the interested observer of social minutiae can get quite a lot of fun out of comparing national attitudes towards improprieties as exemplified by Monsieur Chevallier, Mr. Acton and Mr. White. One thing in Mr. White's book is superb: his description of the meals.

THE MAN IN THE TUNNEL is a collection of short stories remarkable for their range of scene and social setting. The name story is a tale of a child and a mad old man in the Scottish Highlands, it shows the reverence for personality implicit in a non-industrial society, it has feeling and power. There are stories of Bohemian life in London, some horrifying reportage of slum conditions in nineteenth-century New York, and some attractive impressions of life and scenes in the Dutch East Indies. If some of these are little more than the raw material of short stories, the writer's eye for scenes and ear for talk is so unusually sharp that the feeling of life is always present even when the summit of craftmanship is not attained.

RUBY MILLAR.

THE GREAT CONSPIRACY

MUST NIGHT FALL? By Major Tufton Beamish, M.C., M.P. *Hollis and Carter.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

"MARXISM to-day," says the author, "is an international conspiracy on the largest scale the World has ever seen." Elsewhere he points out that "no Communist Party has ever won a Parliamentary majority in a free election in the World's history. Yet there are Communist Governments in Moscow, and in eleven of Europe's capitals". Taking four of these countries: Poland, Bulgaria, Hungary and Rumania, he describes the steps by which Liberty was uprooted and Tyranny enthroned. There is something terribly gruesome about the fact that the blue-print is always so similar, yet so deadly effective. The stealthy approach behind a screen of pseudo-legality. The cover of ancient and revered institutions to destroy the lives and liberties of millions. The Church as an instrument of a party; the Law as a means of silencing opposition; the Police as a bludgeon to keep it for ever silent. Major Tufton Beamish sets down in this book the carefully sifted conclusions of several years of exacting research, supplemented by numerous travels in the Iron Curtain countries. The result is an admirable exposition of the menace of Marxism. The menace by which a disciplined minority can enslave a majority. Then with the three-pronged attack on the Youth, the Education and the Culture of the country, it seeks to close the human mind to the entry of any opposing thought. Marxism now grips twelve countries of Europe. It has engulfed China. Must Night Fall? This is the theme of the last chapter. The reader has been brought face to face with bitter hard reality, but with the satisfaction that when he reaches the last chapter he knows the worst. Night need not fall. It must not fall. But time, as the author points out, is not on our side. We must be up and doing if the sun is not to set in the West.

TWEEDSMUIR

THE PACIFIST MISCALCULATION

EDUCATION FOR PEACE. By Herbert Read. *Routledge and Kegan Paul.* 7*s.* 6*d. net.*

MR. READ propounds the pacifist thesis that war can only be avoided by non-resistance. Instead of fighting we must call to our aid modern psychology and philosophy and through a reformative education purge human nature of its aggressive instincts. There are two obvious criticisms of his thesis. The first is that, though it is doubtless desirable to give to the world a more intelligent education, and though it is possible that such an education would do much to make human nature more civilized and less bellicose, yet we live in time and space. Our time and our opportunities are both limited. We must recognize the fact that there is no possibility of giving this more humane education to that part of the human race which is at any rate the most obvious threat to peace. However plausible the pacifist case may have been in the old liberal world, where, whatever government reigned over a territory, it yet granted some measure of respect to human personality, it makes no sense in the modern world, in which the totalitarian conqueror delights in the destruction of all that is humane. Humanitarian programmes in the modern world can only hope to be successful if they are combined with sane measures of self-defence, so as to give them a chance of surviving. The second is, that doubtless we have much to learn from much of modern philosophy and modern psychology, but what is true in them is only true because it is a repetition and a rediscovery of the ancient truths of religion. Man, according to the teaching of religion, is indeed in his present condition maladjusted to the world around him, but that is only because through original sin he has fallen from his natural innocence and it is possible through grace for him to readjust himself, to shape himself anew as he was made to be. If this theory is true, then indeed there is a possibility of readjusting Man so as to make him at home in the

universe, and in that case we have doubtless much to learn from, among others, the philosophers and the psychologists about how in detail this readjustment is to be made, but we cannot get much further until we first settle whether the claims of religion are true. If they are not true, then the talk about readjustment is meaningless. We are trying to solve a problem to which there is no solution, to interpret

> "A tale, full of sound and fury
> Signifying nothing".

It is curious that Mr. Read should discuss his theories of philosophy and psychology, of art and education, without more than a passing mention of religion on whose truth they all depend.

CHRISTOPHER HOLLIS.

ROYALTY AND HORTICULTURE

THE GARDENS OF HAMPTON COURT. By Mollie Sands. *London, Evans Ltd.* 21*s.*

IN this book Miss Mollie Sands uses her intimate knowledge of Hampton Court to illustrate the history of Gardening from the sixteenth century to the present day. The reader is easily led to the Tudor gardens of Wolsey and Henry VIII with its "knottes" and with its Mount that has now disappeared. From this he passes by degrees to the garden of Charles II, characterized by its canal and limewalks, and then on, after the Revolution, to the long development towards formalized magnificence which did not reach its climax until the middle of the eighteenth century. The reaction towards "naturalism" followed with its insistence on landscape, irregularity, long grass and natural trees. Not until after 1838 when these gardens were first thrown open to the public did they begin to take on their present form, and they still preserve many traces of their earlier growth.

It is the thesis of this book that the gardens of Hampton Court reflect not only changing habits of garden design, but also the personal tastes and political and religious bias of their various royal owners. But while Miss Sands is interesting about the relations between gardening practice and social conditions, her numerous judgments on general English history and politics are frequently superficial and sometimes misleading. Her appraisals of the makers of these gardens, on Edmond Griffith, and John Rose, on William Kent and Humphrey Repton, are of far greater value than her criticisms of the monarchs they served. On gardens in general, however, and on Hampton Court in particular, Miss Sands writes with the facility of an expert, and her book, with its seductive dust-wrapper and its charming illustrations will attract the many readers it deserves.

DAVID DOUGLAS.

A MISLEADING GUIDE

MODERN ENGLISH BALLET. By Fernau Hall. *Andrew Melrose Ltd.* 20*s.*

THIS long book pretends to present the whole picture of English ballet—where it came from, how it grew, where it is going—and though all the material has been presented better elsewhere it has never been crammed into one volume. What a useful book it could have been if some giant of taste and industry had written it, but Mr. Hall is arrogant without authority.

In a short review it is not possible to list the falsities of the book, and such a procedure would be like breaking a mosquito on a wheel. An important sample must suffice: gifted Antony Tudor is *not* "the greatest English choreographer"; whether we like it or not, Frederick Ashton is the greatest English choreographer. Ninette de Valois might have been, but there were no shoulders but hers broad enough and straight enough to support the artistic administration of the national company, Sadler's Wells, which she created, and her choreography has taken second place.

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Antony Tudor left this country soon after war broke out to work in America, and he stayed there. No one would be silly enough to say that Ashton is a better choreographer than Tudor because Ashton stayed in England (and was called up into the R.A.F. nearing forty), but Ashton's continued work in this country has given him, at the worst, enough rope to hang himself, but in spite of some failures he has proved himself.

In Mr. Hall's opinion Madame Rambert's revivals of Tudor's ballets do no justice to the originals, and in American Ballet Theater (which has visited London briefly since the war) some of the dancers have not the emotional maturity to interpret Tudor's rôles. How are we in England to assess this "English choreographer"?

A book of this type needs a fuller list of contents—the sub-chapters should be listed—there is no bibliography, and the photograph of the Messel décor of *The Sleeping Beauty* is dated 1936—a worrying misprint because Nadia Benois did the decoration in 1939, and Messel in 1946, and the two productions are contrasted in the text.

VIVIENNE BENNETT.

"THE GREAT NEW VENTURE"

THE YELLOW BOOK—A SELECTION. Compiled by Norman Denny. *The Bodley Head.* 15*s.*

THE 'Nineties, for all its paraded pallor, was an era of singularly boyish *jeux d'esprit*. In the solemn Victorian social classroom *The Yellow Book* burst like an amateur stink-bomb. "How lucky they were", writes Mr. Norman Denny, in his introductory note to this selection, "to be living in a world in which such an explosion could be heard". It is certain that "austerity" and talk of the atom cause us to find in its *fin-de-siècle* finish more than a pure aesthetic satisfaction. What that decade itself termed "decadence" appears to us now as a haven of rest.

Just what our period sense demands, then, has been Mr. Denny's first consideration in compiling the present anthology. Wherever possible he has tried to reconcile the claims of "intrinsic merit" with those of what he calls "*Yellow Book* virtues". Contributions which embody both these factors, giving to the sensitive expression of fashion the durable permanence of art, are Henry James' *The Death of a Lion*, George Gissing's *The Foolish Virgin*, Max Beerbohm's *A Defence of Cosmetics*; poems by Davidson, Symons and Yeats; and work by Beardsley, Conder, Sickert, Rothenstein and Wilson Steer. One rediscovery of no little value is a story, *The Death Mask* by Ella D'Arcy—author of a mordant penetrating prose—whose tales might well be collected and reprinted.

A plea for justice, perhaps irrelevant: could not some publisher reacquaint us, by means of a selection, with the work in *The Savoy*, a magazine of the period beside which *The Yellow Book* is juvenile reading.

DEREK STANFORD.

SWITZERLAND

INTRODUCTION TO SWITZERLAND. By Maurice Cranston. *Chaterson.* 8*s* 6*d.*

TRAVELLERS IN SWITZERLAND. By G. R. de Beer, F.R.S. *Geoffrey Cumberledge, Oxford University Press.* 25*s.*

POLITICALLY and economically, Switzerland is now even more than usually interesting. As Mr. Cranston says, she "is already in herself a Western Union in miniature: a centre of French, German, and Italian unity which might be the nucleus of federal Europe". But while "she affords a practical model for European unity, yet because of the very success of her system, she will not easily fit into a wider pattern of Western Union".

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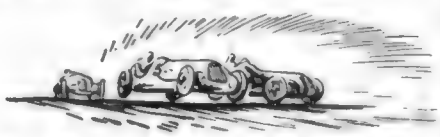

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As he shows in this admirable survey of Swiss institutions, this practical people have wonderfully solved the problem of efficiency without centralization. "Swiss papers are local papers", some having as few as 2,000 readers, but the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* with a circulation of only 65,000 enjoys world-wide repute. He rightly says that "Swiss education, more perhaps than any other single factor, determines the character of Swiss democracy . . . for the emphasis of Swiss democracy is on the equality of man, whereas the emphasis of English Socialism is on the security of the economic order, on planning and social services . . . A class system of education would be unthinkable to the Swiss". They know nothing of the Welfare State, and long refrained from such national insurance schemes as were introducted here before 1914.

"Swiss Towns and Swiss Lakes" is an admirable historico-descriptive chapter, while "The Cultural Heritage" adequately summarizes the Swiss contribution to the arts and literature and in "Four Cities" we get, with much besides, an account of the country's contribution to religious thought. The sixteen plates, including "The Retreat at Marignano" by Hodler, illuminate this delightful and instructive book.

Mr. de Beer's book is an anthological novelty, being not only quotations by the famous about, but also anecdotes regarding the famous in, Switzerland. It has a Chronological Section (from 1941 to 1945), a Topographical Section giving the names of persons associated with some dozen places, and an Alphabetical Section or Index whence we can find our way about the others, looking up, say Goethe, Wilde, D. H. Lawrence, Lenin, Trotsky. Sidney Webb, G. B. Shaw, and Wells do not appear in this index. A curious meritorious work, containing twenty-three singularly well chosen and beautiful illustrations.

BRIAN LUNN.

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FROM THE GROUND UP. By Jorian Jenks. *Hollis and Carter.* 15*s.*

IN this book the author has attempted to outline a new approach to economics—nothing less. What was the starting point of the old approach? It concentrated upon the *amount of labour.* The wealth of a country could be measured by the amount of labour available for production. That was the main idea. It was assumed that, given plenty of labour, production would look after itself. But there was a snag in this approach. An unwarrantable assumption was made—namely, that there was no limit to the amount of goods that could be produced. But there is a limit. The most important of all commodities, food, is not primarily produced by man at all, but by nature. Only a certain amount can be extracted from the ground, and that amount will depend upon the conditions of our treatment of the ground. We rest upon the ground and must build from the ground up.

You don't say so! Is not this all too simple? I fear not. Foundations are always simple. But when we don't get our foundations right, then there will be endless complication gathering into final catastrophe. Can anyone deny that the economic situation to-day is almost catastrophic? Mr. Jorian Jenks reviews the whole matter and revalues all the catchphrase in a book of great importance. How sane it is! How different the writer from a Karl Marx sitting in the British Museum Reading Room remote from the actualities of life and the conditions upon which our existence is based!

JOHN STEWART COLLIS.

THE WORLD'S ROOM

THE WORLD'S ROOM. The Collected Poems of Laurence Whistler with Decorations by Rex Whistler. *Heinemann.* 15*s.*

IT is in Mr. Whistler's favour that he is difficult to place as a poet. He does not fit

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The second volume to be issued of this periodical, published under the aegis of the Faculty of Law, University of Cambridge, is devoted to an examination of the Criminal Justice Act, 1948. 18s.

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MACMILLAN

into the snug categories in which so many of his contemporaries are content to lie, guarded from harm by the shadows of finer men. At times he is not a very good poet; he lacks the deadly evenness which never gives an opportunity to enemy or friend, and when he crashes, he crashes with a healthy bang. Like his brother, whose decorations are an integral part of the book, he is sometimes too fluent and too prettified, but just as he has almost persuaded the reader to dismiss him as a mere entertainer he sounds an individual and authoritative note.

"Even the smiling lamp
Beside him, like a patient animal,
Hourly listening in the quiet light,
Forms an opinion critically aloof."

His world of sea winds tearing at the windows of lonely farmhouses, lovers quarrelling in flame-flickering rooms, autumnal woodland rides and late-Classical myths is sufficiently unfashionable to be perplexing; but he shows that it is possible to make poetry out of such unpromising properties. It is a rather lunar poetry and its fires carry more threat to spirit than to flesh. However, one remembers it.

R. G. G. Price.

TRANSPORT CONTROVERSY

A Streetcar Named Desire. By Tennessee Williams. *John Lehmann.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

THE French are probably the only truly adult writers while the Americans perhaps suffer most from adolescence, shown at its least fortunate when they become sentimental. Tennessee Williams failed, in my opinion, with the Glass Menagerie chiefly through this fault. In *A Streetcar Named Desire* he chose a tougher theme and handled it with considerably more strength; but it cannot achieve the heights to which it aspires if only for lapses into the wrong kind of sentimentality. It is as though the writer is striving to win our affection for a character by displaying his own; at any rate he fails entirely to conceal his emotional sympathy. The result is that the character in question is weakened by what comes over as self-pity. Since the theme, setting and story are all relatively sordid, it is essential that there should be no descent from high tragedy, no moments when falsity allows the doom to ring hollow. Many dramatic masterpieces are sordid but the intensity of the conflict, the inevitability of the climax and impersonality in treatment allow of their being acceptable—even for teaching to schoolchildren.

Oscar Wilde pronounced that to the pure all things are indecent but in the controversy that has raged around Streetcar the purist has been dragged in along with the pure to add confusion to the issues. Unfortunately, for the reasons given if for no others, the purist has been unable to pronounce the play a masterpiece and therefore virtually above criticism. As the play passed the Lord Chamberlain and received its licence to be presented (and worthwhile plays have often been refused on grounds of indecency) Streetcar is officially "pure" for public consumption.

The real crux of the conflict is that Streetcar is produced by a management enjoying exemption from Entertainment Tax and, worse still, is a success which on the face of it doesn't need support from public monies, whether decent or not. This tax relief is granted to a management who, in the first place, plough its profits (if any) back into further productions; only rarely is any other financial support given. The artistic policy has also to be approved; this does not mean that the merits of each and every play, producer, actor, etc., has to be vetted. Since this would mean the establishment of a Censor of Artistic Merit it would be highly undesirable and probably impossible. If such managements occasionally make a boob (and I am not claiming that in choosing Streetcar they did any such thing) they have given Great Britain considerable artistic value which should far outweigh an occasional lapse. The policy, not the play, is the thing with which

to catch the conscience of the Government. And quite right too.

The manuscript is not the play itself; that only comes to magic life through the presentation by living actors. When read in the study, faults, including those I am mentioning, cannot be overlooked. In performance they are less obtrusive. Streetcar is strong meat, rare in fact, and though they might not like it, the truly pure would not find offence in the play. It has considerable merit both as theatrical literature and as good theatre; it was undoubtedly right that it should be seen in London and even better that it should be played with a magnificent cast and every theatre facility.

Nevertheless, when all is said and done, the story is one of sordid sex which fails to show man in conflict with the gods, to unite all womanhood in its women, to expose all passions in its desire or all despair in its frustration. It does not achieve the universality which is essential for a masterpiece; but surely it is better to miss a celestial bus than never to have attempted the journey at all.

JOHN V. TREVOR.

THOMAS GIRTIN

THOMAS GIRTIN 1775-1802. By Jonathan Mayne. *F. Lewis.* £5 5s. 0d.

WHAT is the kind of book on Girtin, or any other English painter, that we need? Certainly one which will help us by the insight of the critic to feel the power of his finest work, one which will present his finest work in a frame of sympathetic interpretation as well as the frame of history. Judged in that way, Mr. Mayne's book on Girtin must be called evasive. The footnote has too much invaded the text. As if Mr. Mayne were scared of criticism, he fills his account too much with the small and uncertain details of Girtin's biography and pedigree. And then follow reproductions which are disappointing indeed.

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Disappointing in two ways. His publisher makes a mean use of the possibilities of reproduction. Big pages are tenanted by small reproductions deplorably fuzzy. Will English publishers always be left behind, and never look for example at the way in which the skilful publishers of Switzerland design and illustrate a book on painting?

That is not Mr. Mayne's fault. But "as far as possible unfamiliar works have been chosen for reproduction". Why? Girtin is a remarkable artist of a sombre and serene dignity by virtue of that small number of his best things. The unfamiliar water-colours stay unfamiliar since they are most of them worthless. Six at the most of Mr. Mayne's illustrations would suggest to anyone unfamiliar with Girtin that he was anything but a mediocrity. No one would see any point in publishing a selection of a poet which contained only his middling and inferior poems. But in painting . . . I do not deny the limited usefulness of this book to professional students, but there it ends. A chance chucked away once more.

GEOFFREY GRIGSON.

REAL POETRY

MIND'S WEATHER: POEMS. By Margaret Millett. *Bruno Cassirer Publishers Ltd.*, 10*s* 6*d*. *net*. Edition limited to 500 copies, numbered and signed by the author.

AT the present time a published volume, however slender, of real poetry is an event. Not that poetry is dead among us, as some suppose; but poets of genius and artists in verse have lately fallen, or been forced, into a fashion of issuing privately printed books. Few outside a circle of eccentrics, having no credentials to the character of poet, and concerned solely with their subconscious adventures, venture now to air publicly their productions.

Miss Millett is not of that ephemeral tribe. She writes naturally and she has something interesting to say: moreover, she has an ear for music, an eye for colour, and a mind open to common sense, without all of which gifts there can be no poetry.

Each of the thirty-two little poems in this beautifully printed book is worth reading, and the most of them are worth remembering. Some are profound; all express a strong and unusual personality. Who that loves poetry will not rejoice in a sonnet so original and fanciful as this *Nocturne*:

> The night was so intensely still that I,
> Who at my open window sat, could hear
> The flitter-flight of bats and little cry;
> And as I waited for the moon to clear
> The trees, I gave myself unto the night:
> Spreading bat's wings I flew and felt the air
> Streaming beneath me in my fitful flight.
> I was the moon who rose in beauty rare,
> I was the still dark water of the moat
> From which her image shone. I was the trees,
> I was the dew-wet grass, cool and remote,
> I was the air of night—in all of these
> I had my being: I, who moveless sat,
> Was woman, water, air and flitting bat.

In these days of exhorbitant costs, half a guinea seems a small price to pay for verses lovely as these, verses which like all the best poetry, belonging not to this nor to any other period in particular, but to all ages, past, present and future.

CHARLES RICHARD CAMMELL.

THE WORDS OF MERCURY

ENGLISH DRAMA FROM EARLY TIMES TO THE ELIZABETHANS. By A. P. Rossiter. *Hutchinson's University Library*. 16*s*.

SHAKESPEARE AND THE ROMANCE TRADITION. By E. C. Pettet. *Staples Press*. 12*s*. 6*d*.

KEATS missed a good point when he projected into a corporate eternity the ill-assorted circle of the Mermaid Tavern. The flow of their gaiety must be sustained in no small measure by the work of those scholars

who have never quite caught up with them. Simple exposition is a very different thing from psycho-analysis, criminology or sheer inquisitiveness. Lytton Strachey put his finger on the attraction and the peril when he said that such an age of *baroque* called for "some means by which the modern mind might reach to an imaginative comprehension of those beings of three centuries ago". For imaginative comprehension too many critics have substituted what might in their own jargon be labelled source-mania. We were familiar with the concept that denied to Shakespeare and his contemporaries an invention of their own; but when eminent critics make it their dearest endeavour to establish the derivativeness of everything the Elizabethans thought and felt, the voice of reaction is not to be stilled.

This school of investigation is by now so well advanced that Mr. Rossiter, quite as a matter of course, can let loose on sixteenth century drama a backwash from the Middle Ages whose conscious realization would have swamped it. Are we bathed in new light when we discover the ancient fertility-ritual in *The Winter's Tale*, or the medieval skull-symbol in *Hamlet*? Yet Mr. Rossiter has put together an entertaining recapitulation of the heads of modern knowledge on the steady formalization of English drama. He has a wide acquaintance with the critical literature of his period, and he enjoys friendly depreciation as much as he enjoys playing with words. Perhaps his monograph would be safer inside Cambridge University than in the unsuspecting hands of people who draw on Hutchinson's University Library: tendentiousness, which is engaging in one place is dangerous in another; but anyway his points are often matters of opinion.

Matters of opinion, too, are Mr. Pettet's assertion of *Romeo and Juliet* that "apart from its *dénouement*, it is both in spirit and substance as much a comedy as *Much Ado About Nothing*"; or that *Cymbeline* is distinguished for "vigour and excitement of narrative". His thesis is difficult to dispute but always worth

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following. He examines Shakespeare's borrowings, and his departures, from the imported tradition of romantic literature. He makes the useful point that Shakespeare could have done a lot more with love as a comic device had he not been tied to the conventions of romance literature. But Shakespeare was content to be tied: and though the departures are easy enough to trace throughout the problem plays, in the rest of the comedies they reinforce the belief that you can only joke with genuine comic force about things which seem important; which is one of the points of difference between comedy and farce. For the rest, this is another of those excellent commentaries which give weight to the cheap truth that the tragedies offer the ambitious critic more distinction than the comedies. An interpreter of the impalpable is a brave man. The words of Mercury are harsh after the songs of Apollo.

JOHN WHALE.

THE WITHERED BRANCH

THE WITHERED BRANCH. By D. S. Savage. *Eyre and Spottiswoode.* 10*s.* 6*d.*

FEW people today believe in absolute standards whether in life or literature; criticism becomes the justification of prejudice. This book is not for those who do not believe it possible to move beyond prejudice to a perception of truth. D. S. Savage is a genuine critic, and judges by absolute standards; he deals directly and ruthlessly with the fashionable writers of our century, revealing their work as essentially empty and negative. Lack of belief, he maintains, failure on the part of novelists to make the religious affirmation required for an orientation to truth, is the cause of the degeneration of modern fiction. His book is, in fact, an examination of contemporary nihilism and futility. He penetrates to the mental and moral attitude at the root of Ernest Hemingway's cult of violence, E. M. Forster's sentimental liberalism, Virginia Woolf's aestheticism, Margiad Evans' demonic nature-worship, Aldous Huxley's anti-personal intellectualism and James Joyce's effort to create a private language and a private cosmos.

Although D. S. Savage does not explicitly say so, and however uncomfortable the fact, his criticism of each book is—as genuine criticism must be—essentially moral criticism of its author's attitude and intention. It would be legitimate to comment: "Judge not that ye be not judged," but Savage writes "the pursuit of meaning presupposes a vow, an act of dedication and the acceptance of a vocation," and the true critic, perceiving truth and accepting criticism as a vocation, must not be *afraid* to judge.

D. S. Savage has made his act of dedication and however harsh the acceptors of current fashion may find this book, he is fulfilling his vocation, for truth is contained here.

J. B. PICK.

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THE ENGLISH REVIEW MAGAZINE

MAY 1950

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